

WILLIAM MARSHAL
FIRST EARL OF PEMBROKE
AND REGENT OF ENGLAND (1216–1219)

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NEW COLLEGE OXFORD

‘Quoniam Tanquam Aurum in Furnace Sic Se in Necessitate Probavit’

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FOREWORD

THIS small volume on William Marshal is a reproduction of the Essay which was awarded the Stanhope Prize at Oxford University for the year 1929. It is with some hesitation that I publish it. My chief reason for doing so is that in collecting material for the Essay I found no life of the Marshal outside of the primary sources. Having lived in five reigns, the story of his career covers a long period in mediaeval history, and in view of the prominence of the Marshal in the affairs of his time, added to the importance of the work he accomplished as Regent of England in the early years of the reign of Henry III, it is hoped that a brief record of his life, now appearing for the first time in the English language, may serve to revive interest in a great warrior and statesman who successfully piloted his country through an anxious and stormy interlude.

T.L.J.

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I

A YOUNGER SON

IN the year 1152 the fancy of King Stephen saved from execution a boy of tender years. This boy was William, the son of John Marshal. About his safety as a hostage in the hands of Stephen the young William's father seems to have been little concerned. His answer to those who told him of the danger to the boy, due to the breach of the truce with Stephen, was that he had anvil and hammer with which to forge afresh.¹ The life of the little William—a younger son—was apparently considered of small account. Yet by his achievements as a man he was greatly to outshine both his father and his brothers, and in four successive reigns was to prove himself the trusty friend of English kings.

William's father John, who gave him as a hostage to Stephen at the siege of Newbury in 1152, was a 'chevaliers proz et loials'.² As a

¹*H.G.M.*, l. 514.

'quer encore aveit
Les enclumes e les marteals
Dunt forgereit de plus beals.'

² *Ibid.*, l. 27. John Marshal is witness to a Charter of Henry I addressed to the Archbishop of Rouen. *Cal. Docs. France*, p. 137.

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supporter of Matilda, John Marshal led at his own charge a troop of three hundred soldiers.¹ His position as Marshal was inherited by him from his father Gilbert.² John is mentioned as 'Magister Mariscallus' in the 'Constitutio Domus Regis' of c. 1135.³ He also appears as a witness to several grants made to religious foundations by Henry I and even to one by Stephen.⁴ With his father Gilbert he was unsuccessfully impleaded in the court of Henry I by Robert de Venoiz and William de Hastings for the office of master of the king's marshalsea.⁵

Besides his active part in the Civil War—his protection of Matilda's flight from Winchester is vividly described in the *Histoire*—John Marshal is noteworthy as making appeal against a judgment given in Archbishop Becket's court. On this account the Archbishop was fined for failure to appear when summoned to the great council at Northampton.⁶ Soon afterwards John died (probably 1165) and two sons, Gilbert and John, the issue of his first marriage, did not survive him long.⁷

¹ *H.G.M.*, I, 52.

² *Rot. Chart.*, I, 46. Confirmation to William. See also Dugdale: *Baronage*, p. 600. Foss: *Judges of England*.

³ *Red Book of Excheq.*, p. 812.

⁴ *Cal. Docs. France*, pp. 137, 169, 199.

⁵ See note 4.

⁶ *Becket Memorials*, I, 30. The name of John Marshal appears in the list of witnesses to the Constitutions of Clarendon. See Stubb's *S.C.*, p. 164.

⁷ *H.G.M.*, III, p. 2, n. 3.

A Younger Son

William Marshal was the son of John's second wife Sybil, the daughter of Patrick, Earl of Salisbury. The second marriage of William's father seems to have been a matter of expediency. He divorced his first wife and married Patrick's daughter in order to make peace between himself and the Earl with whom he had been engaged in war.¹ William, the second son of this marriage, was born probably in 1144.²

John Marshal's lands³ passed to his eldest son, also called John. The younger brothers had therefore to make their own way in the world, and, after the conclusion of peace, William was sent to a relative in Normandy, the Chamberlain of Tan-carville. Here, in the land of joust and tourney, began his training for the career of a knight, but the precise date of his receiving knighthood does not appear to be recorded.⁴

As he grew to manhood he was a figure of great beauty, handsome in appearance and dignified in bearing. He was possessed of unusual strength, but at this time gained an unenviable reputation as a great eater, drinker and heavy sleeper. "Guillaume

¹*H.G.M.*, I, 372.

²His parents married in 1141 or 1142. See *H.G.M.*, III, p. xxv.

³See *Pipe Roll* of 1130. There were certain estates in Wiltshire—not of great extent, for John Marshal was one of the lesser nobles.

⁴Apparently his father decided to send him to Normandy in 1154, and according to M. Meyer's calculation he was a squire for eight years. See *H.G.M.*, III, p. xxvi.

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gaste-viande' he was called.¹ But 'Enkor traira
féve de pot!' said the Chamberlain of Tancarville,²
who regarded his sturdy young relative with
favour.

¹*H.G.M.*, l. 780.

²*Ibid.*, l. 792.

II

A FIGURE OF CHIVALRY

It was in the tournaments and warfare of the time that William Marshal as a youth found his chief interest and occupation. Everything depended upon the result of the combats in which he took part. By his courage and skill, and the strength of his arm he earned his daily bread; while success in the tournament was necessary to gain the honour which would advance his reputation, and bring him to the notice of the high personages whose favour was sought by young and promising knights. In these encounters his great physical strength stood him in good stead.

Thus William's early life was one long story of knightly adventure. Whether it was in the tournaments, when he 'erra par totes terres', or in the affair at Drincourt,¹ an episode in the frequent warfare of the time, that he first made a name for himself by his prowess, we cannot be certain.² But his reputation was growing,³ and about 1167

¹ See *H.G.M.*, III, p. xxvii; also Norgate: *Min. of Henry III.*

² *H.G.M.* M. Meyer has pointed out the chronological difficulties in the arrangement of this part of the poem. III, p. xxviii.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 1518. 'En France et en Avauterre,
Parmi Hiennau & parmi Flandres
Fu de son bien fait granz esclandres.'

According to his biographer William was growing fast in reputation.

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the young knight who had set out unknown as a boy was able to return home with honour to see his relatives in England. [1167.] His father being now dead, he sought out Earl Patrick of Salisbury, his mother's brother, who received him gladly. But his stay in England was brief. Indeed, before he left France, the Chamberlain of Tancarville, in granting him leave to depart, had urged him to return, telling him that England was a poor country for the knight-errant. Far better would it be to seek still further fortune in Brittany or Normandy.¹

When William returned to France it was with Earl Patrick. They went in aid of King Henry II against his revolted Poitevin subjects, whose faithlessness is frequently noticed by the chroniclers.² During the expedition William experienced one of the great adventures of his life. Caught in an ambush his uncle was struck from his horse and died on the spot.³ Such a treacherous act called for the execution of a striking vengeance. But William was outnumbered by his foes and had been caught without his helm. Nevertheless, the courageous young knight made a desperate stand with his back against a hedge 'like a wild boar brought to bay by the dogs'. At last one of

¹ *H.G.M.*, I, 1543.

² *G. le Bret.*, *Phil.* VI, 358. *Matthew Paris*, *Chron. Maj.*, III, p. 84.

³ *H.G.M.*, I, 1652. See also *Rog. of Hov.*, I, p. 273. He says that Patrick was returning from a pilgrimage to St. James.

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the enemy struck at him through the hedge and wounded him; the others then fell upon him and he was taken prisoner. Weary and bleeding, no one caring for his wounds, he was carried off by his captors.* Youth and strength, however, prevailed over his wounds—in spite of their re-opening when he joined in the sports of the knights who were guarding him¹—and William recovered his former health. At length he was ransomed by Queen Eleanor, and again we hear of his prowess and largesse,² for what he gained in the tourney he freely dispensed to his friends and followers.

[1170.] The year 1170 was an important one in William's career. It was the year in which Henry II, wishing to secure the succession in the Angevin line, had his son Henry crowned King of England.³ At the same time he did William the honour of putting him in the young King's household 'por lui garder & enseigner.'⁴

Thus already William's reputation was sufficient to bring him to the King's notice. Indeed the youthful knight seems to have been specially honoured. He takes precedence over all others of

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 1840.

² *Ibid.*, l. 1904.

³ *Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 5.

⁴ *H.G.M.*, l. 1948. William accepted with the words:

'Ici n'a mot de borgainnier,

& g'en ferai tot mon poer.'

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simple baronial rank in the lists of witnesses to charters issued by the young King, and clearly occupied a prominent position in the latter's household.¹

Henceforth until the death of the young King in 1183 William's daily life was bound up with the strife between the latter and his father, and with the tournaments in which the young Henry and his troop took part. During one interlude of estrangement William absented himself from his master's court. Usually, however, it seems to have been upon William Marshal, whether in mimic or in real warfare, that the young King principally relied.

In his new position as King the young Henry became the rallying-point around which all the forces of opposition to his father tended to gather.² There were two centres of disturbance, the one in England, the other in Anjou; and circumstances on the Continent now pointed to the probability of war. The continental position of the English King was particularly vexatious to Louis VII of France by reason of the fact that through his marriage with Eleanor, the heiress of Aquitaine, Henry also became ruler of his wife's dominions, his power thus tending to overshadow that of the French crown.

There was also a strong feudal element in the

¹ *Cal. Docs. France*, p. 8, nos. 31, 33.

² *H.G.M.*, I. 1926.

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situation—an element peculiarly mixed with a turbulent love of fighting for its own sake. 'I would fain have the great barons ever wrath with one another', said the poet-warrior of Perigueux, Bertrand de Born.¹ Such was the political mentality of the South; and the Poitevin or Gascon lord seems always to have been ready to join in any strife or intrigue which came his way.

There were, moreover, causes of feudal unrest at home—inquiries into knights' fees and an inquest of sheriffs.² Henry's attention was occupied by the troubles arising out of the murder of Becket and the conquest of Ireland by Strongbow and the Geraldines of Pembroke, while in France the influence of his secret foes—his son's wife was the daughter of Louis of France and Eleanor³ had been alienated by his infidelity—was working against him. Thus, in England and on the Continent at the same time, events were shaping in such a way as to lead to revolt.

The young King was discontented. His income was insufficient to allow him to spend as he liked upon largesse.⁴ Encouraged by the French King, he, therefore, demanded his heritage, or at least some portion of it, where he might live as an independent ruler with his queen. He was refused.

¹ Norgate: *Eng. under Angev. Kings*, II, p. 212. ² *Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 4.

³ But see reputation given to Eleanor in *William of Tyre*, Book XVI, chap. xxvii ('fatuis mulieribus').

⁴ *H.G.M.*, I, 1967.

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Alarmed by his father's proposal to endow John with a portion of the Angevin lands as part of the scheme of John's marriage with the daughter of the Count of Maurienne, the young King broke into open revolt.¹

The name of William Marshal is found in the list of those supporting the young Henry in his revolt against his father.² The war gave fresh proof of the growing position of William. In 1173 when the young King was threatened by his father's army he was advised that he should be knighted. To which he replied: 'I willingly agree. The best knight, who has done much and will do more, shall, God willing, render me my sword.' Thus it was William himself who was honoured with the knighting of the young King.³ But the rebellious action of the latter against his father met with little success; Louis' aid was not of the strongest⁴; and eventually terms were arranged and father and son reconciled.

[1175.] At the conclusion of the war William returned to England with his young master,⁵ but, tiring of the quiet life they had perforce to spend at home, it was not long before they were both back in France. In William Marshal before all the King advised his son to trust.⁶

¹ *Rog. of Hov.*, II, pp. 41-3, 45.

² *Benedict*, I, pp. 45-6.

³ *H.G.M.*, I, 2079 *et seq.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 2272.

⁵ *Eyton*, p. 190, 202. *Cf. Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 72.

⁶ *H.G.M.*, I, 2427.

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For the next few years William was constantly with the young King, engaging with him in all the principal tournaments. Marshal appears as a figure of universal admiration, yet his life must have been similar in essential respects to that of other young knights—Guillaume des Barres, Amauri de Meulan, and the rest.¹ In fact, in the story of the Marshal we have the contemporary history of a social class; it gives a vivid representation of the life of a knight in the twelfth century, 'le grand siècle du Moyen Age'.² In the *Histoire*, too, we are indeed reading history rather than a 'chanson courtoise' or 'épopée nationale'. We see the knight himself, magnified a little it may be by the natural enthusiasm of the poet, but, nevertheless, a real figure living in a real world, rather than 'toujours le chevalier français idéal, galant et aventureux'.³ Neither the romances of chivalry nor the chroniclers give us so vivid a picture of the twelfth-century tournament as the story of William the Marshal.⁴

For William and the young men of his time the tourney served the purpose of a school of war. In the 'ludi militares' and 'militaria exercita'⁵ the

¹ H.G.M. See list of names given at tournament of Lagni-sur-Marne.

² Jules Quicherat . . . in Léon Gautier, p. 32.

³ Petit de Julleville: *Hist. de langue et lit. français*, p. 265.

⁴ See H.G.M., III, p. xxxvi, on especial value of the poem for its accounts of the tourney.

⁵ Du Cange. *Dissertation VI*.

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youth had first to see blood run before he could be expected to fight manfully in actual warfare.

The tournament proper must be distinguished from the joust. 'Un tournoi est toujours un "combat par troupes", et la joute, au contraire, n'a jamais été qu'un combat isolé, "un contre un".'¹

The knightly institution of William's time seems to have been in a transitional stage. It was no longer the 'rendezvous militaire où plusieurs milliers d'hommes sont exacts et se tuent en temps voulu'² like the 'cembel' mentioned in the earlier 'chansons de geste'.³ Yet it had not reached the elaborate stage known in succeeding centuries. The tourney of William's day was still a general encounter, a 'mêlée'. It must have been somewhat similar to a general cavalry engagement, not fought according to convention, but rather a case of gain or lose all.⁴ Fighting in the open country, retreating knights sometimes passed through village streets, and foot soldiers were also occasionally introduced into the fray. Nor is there any mention of weapons having been blunted.⁵ The differences between the tourney and actual warfare were chiefly, as M. Meyer points out:

¹ Léon Gautier, p. 676.

² *Ibid.*,

³ 'Hugues Capet' (*Anciens Poètes de la France*), p. 7. Hugh is given 200 florins 'Puis que joustier vollez et siervir le cembiel'.

⁴ *H.G.M.*, I. 1309.

⁵ Léon Gautier writes of the broken arms and blunted points used in the tourneys, but he must have been writing of the customs of a later date. There is no hint of such a custom in the *Histoire*.

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- (1) The combat was held in some place previously determined.
- (2) After the combat there was a truce and the warriors paid courtesy visits to one another.
- (3) At the end of the fighting the principal men present met together to decide to whom the prize for knightly valour should be awarded.¹

Such was the form of fighting in which William and the young Henry engaged. Knights from far afield came to take part in it—from France, England, Normandy, Brittany, Champagne, Poitou.² It was William who taught the young King to restrain his troop at the commencement of a tourney, then to charge suddenly, so taking the forces already engaged by surprise.³

Many a good story is recounted of William's deeds at these tourneys. At Pleurs he excited the admiration of all by his valour, and at the conclusion of the combat the Count of Flanders proposed that a gift presented by a noble lady should be sent to William Marshal, 'proz . . . e corteis e leials'. After a search the latter was discovered at the forge, his head upon the anvil, the smith striving with the aid of hammer and tongs to remove the helmet in which, in the stress of combat, William's head had become firmly wedged. When at length he was relieved of his helmet, he received the proffered gift with

¹ *H.G.M.*, III, p. xxxvii.

² *Ibid.*, l. 2780.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 2764.

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modesty, maintaining that he owed it rather to the courtesy of the givers than to his own merit. On returning to those who sent them, the knights who had borne the prize to William were not silent as to where they had found him, and the story increased the admiration in which he was held.¹

The tourney was in other ways also a profitable employment for the young knight. A certain Roger de Gaugi, a brave and capable fighter, 'mais qu'auques esteit coveitos',² offered his companionship to William and was accepted; and by their joint efforts they made prisoners 103 knights. The successful fighter soon became a popular figure. At the tourney of Joigni³ the ladies asked William to sing to them. When he had finished a young herald commenced a new song with the refrain:

Mareschal,
Kar me donez un boen cheval.

Straightway William, giving no hint of his intention, rode against the knights then entering the field, and, unhorsing one, presented the fallen man's horse to the herald. All present declared it was the most charming exploit they had ever witnessed at a tourney. So grew the young knight's fame!

It is evident, too, from the *Histoire* that William

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 2879 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, l. 3384.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 2431.

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was a tower of strength to the young King's troop. At first it had met with but little success, but William's energy and his care always to hold himself near the young King to guard him against capture went far to retrieve the situation. The French knights had despised the English and Normans—the author of the *Histoire* gives first place to the French knights for chivalry—but William's growing fame as a valiant knight must have done much to improve the current opinion held of English knighthood.

His success, however, made envious others less chivalrous than himself. By the agency of such cowardly foes, far too terrified to challenge William to his face, rumours reached the hearing of the young King of an intrigue between his wife and the handsome young knight. It was also whispered that William had acquired his reputation by a kind of fraud, that as soon as the combat began one, Henri de Norrois, used to cry

Ca, Dex aie al Mareschall !¹

and that with this the press around Marshal became so thick that he had only to open his arms to capture all those about him. For a time William kept silent and held himself apart, but soon the rumours against him were carried to the ears of Henry's father.

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 5221.

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[1182.] At the brilliant Christmas court at Caen in 1182 William appeared and, in the presence of Henry II, demanded from the young King right of battle with those who accused him. But his request was refused.¹ William then proposed that he should cut off a finger of his right hand, and fight so disabled against the strongest of his foes. No one came forward. Not one of those who had spread calumny against him dared to speak before his face. William then took his leave and departed. Tempting offers were made to him by some of the French lords to persuade him to enter their service, but William courteously refused them all, declaring that he would now make a pilgrimage to the 'Three Kings of Cologne'.²

[1183.] Meanwhile irritation caused by the question of homage to be done to the young King by his brothers brought renewed strife in the Angevin household.³ The Poitevins disliked the heavy hand of Richard. They therefore appealed against him to the young King, who as such was able to use the typically feudal excuse that, as their king, he must protect his men against the tyranny of their lord, that is against his brother, Richard. When the army of Henry II set out against him, the young King was advised by his brother Geoffrey, and by Geoffrey of Lusignan, to recall

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 5789.

² He fought in a tourney before his pilgrimage, I. 5923 *et seq.*

³ See *Reg. of Hov.*, II, p. 278.

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William. At the same time those who had accused the latter began to find excuses for leaving the court before the war, thus revealing their treachery.¹

The messengers sent by the young Henry to recall William Marshal encountered him as he was returning from Cologne. He received the news with rejoicing. Before returning, however, he obtained, with the aid of letters from Philip Augustus and the Archbishop of Rheims, the permission of Henry II to rejoin the young King.

[1183.] But not for long was William to remain in the service of his lord, with whom he was now reconciled. For in the midst of pillaging the countryside, after violating the famous shrine of Rocamadour itself, the young King was taken ill. At Martel he died. Caught by death almost in the act of sacrilege, he made a deathbed repentance, and to William, 'familiari suo', he bequeathed the task of carrying his cross to the Holy Land.²

The relationship between the young Henry, whose conduct often exhibits him in a very unfavourable light, and the loyal William is one of peculiar interest. Besides his fealty there would seem to have been some other bond, some power of fascination, which held William to him in life, and afterwards sent him with his cross to the East.

¹ *H.G.M.*, I, 6460.

² *Ibid.*, I, 6896. Cf. *Reg. of Hov.*, II, p. 279; *William of Newburgh*, I, p. 234.

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Others seem to have come under this spell. To the author of the *Histoire* the young Henry is the door by which chivalry returned to the land.¹ The 'Anonyme de Bethune' calls him 'li preus et li vaillaus et li larges et li cortois Henris, li jouenes rois'.² We read also in the *Histoire des Ducs* that 'moult ama boins chevaliers; larghes estoit sour toz homes, et si estoit moult bians'.³ To the young knights about him, and doubtless to the trouvères as well, it was his largesse that made him the flower of chivalry.

—Ou mest Largesse? dites mei.

—Ou? eng el cuer al gienble rei.⁴

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 2642.

² Anonyme de Bethune (*Recueil*, XXIV, p. 750).

³ *Hist. des Ducs.*, p. 82.

⁴ *H.G.M.*, l. 5068. It is natural that a trouvère, as the author of the *Histoire* probably was (see *H.G.M.* Introd.), should praise a giver of largesse, for the trouvère's living largely depended upon the maintenance of chivalry.

See also 'Sermo de morte et sepultura Henrici Regis Junioris' (by Archdeacon Thomas Agnellus of Wells) in *Coggeshall*.

III

IN THE SERVICE OF HENRY II

THE death of the young King in the year 1183 marks the end of a chapter in the career of William Marshal. His tournament days were almost over. He had to prepare for his journey to Palestine. After taking leave of King Henry, who pressed him to return as soon as possible to enter his service,¹ William crossed over to England in order to bid farewell to his sisters and friends. Of his life in Syria, unfortunately, scarcely anything is known, though according to the *Histoire Gui de Lusignan*, the Templars, and Hospitallers were loth to lose his help when he departed.¹

On his return from the East in the autumn of 1187, after an absence of about two years,² William joined the service of Henry II, and was once more engaged in the wars caused by the ceaseless strife arising out of the Angevin family relationships. Philip Augustus, too, a man of great practical wisdom ever on the alert to seize any opportunity—and excuses were ever to hand in marriages, dowries, wardships—to bring about

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 7244.

¹ *Ibid.*, l. 7289.

² It was at this time that Henry gave to William the heiress of Lancaster. He did not marry her as he might have done but held her in great honour 'comme sa chière amie', whatever this means. *H.G.M.*, l. 7317.

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the disruption of the empire of the Angevins, was steadily working towards the consolidation of his own power at their expense. In 1188 an interview took place between the two kings at which they embraced and agreed to take the cross. But only a few months had passed before the quarrel broke out afresh. In June of the same year Philip invaded Berri and seized Châteauroux. William was soon to have his share of fighting in the field.

Before war broke out William acted as an envoy¹ on behalf of Henry, and it was he who suggested to the latter that Philip's proposal for a decision between himself and the English King by a combat of champions should be carried out in the court of the Emperor or of some other independent ruler. The proposal, however, came to nothing, for it soon appeared that the King of France was only mocking Henry.²

[1188.] A number of raids followed. Having observed that the French King had dismissed his troops, William advised Henry to do likewise and then to summon them again secretly. This ruse enabled a successful foray to be carried out in the direction of Mantes and Ivry.³ Henry fell sick at Chinon, but by his orders William and the Seneschal made another raid, this time in the

¹ *Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 344.

² *H.G.M.*, I, 7591. { Possibly William's part in these events has

³ *Ibid.*, I, 7784. { been somewhat exaggerated.

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direction of Montmirail. It is in connection with the attack on this castle that we find the name of John d'Erlée mentioned for the first time. He continued to be William's faithful follower for many years, indeed until the latter's death.

Shortly after this tentative warfare a crisis was reached in the relations of Henry and Richard. Near Bonmoulins an interview took place. Richard desired from his father an explicit recognition of his rights as heir. Lest he should appear to grant it by force under the existing circumstances Henry refused. As a result of this refusal, Richard did homage to the King of France for all his Continental fiefs.¹ The next step was the departure of Richard without taking the customary leave.

William made an attempt to win back Richard by following after him, but he had got too far ahead to be overtaken. Henry sent over to England to gather forces for the coming struggle. But his health was failing; he had little zest for the task; and relied more and more on William's support. It was at this time that the King promised the latter the hand of the heiress of Striguil.² William was employed to negotiate with the French King, but the success of his mission was prevented by

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 8118. *Cf. Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 354. Also p. 355. Richard did homage 'de omnibus tenementis patris sui transmarinis'; but saving his rights to his father. See *Diceto*, II, p. 50.

² *Ibid.*, I. 8303.

William Marshal, First Earl of Pembroke the cunning of William Longchamp acting on behalf of Richard.

[1189.] The French troops advanced on Mans where King Henry now was,¹ and to meet them he sent out a reconnoitring party under William Marshal. The French advance was most unwelcome to Henry, and although it continued he refused to think of fighting, even rebuking William for appearing armed. The King soon saw his mistake, however, for the French suddenly attacked,² and the English were forced to retreat.

In the course of this movement William, who was covering the retreat, found himself face to face with Richard, impetuously pushing in pursuit. Taken aback by the suddenness of the meeting, and fearing William's wrath, Richard cried: 'For God's feet! Marshal, slay me not; it would not befit you, for I am unarmed'.

'Nenill' retorted William, 'let the devil kill you! I will not'. With those words William slew Richard's horse, so delaying the advance and enabling Henry and his troops to get away.³

The retreat of the English was continued to Chinon. Day by day the King's illness was growing worse. By William's advice Henry accepted Philip's invitation to meet him near Tours. Here Henry was compelled to do homage to Philip,⁴ a

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 8381.

³ *H.G.M.*, I. 8837 *et seq.*

² *Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 363.

⁴ *Rog. of Hov.*, II, p. 365.

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truce was arranged, and the Kings separated. But Henry was broken in spirit. With the news that his favourite son John was among Philip's allies, he retired to his bed, and sank into a semi-conscious state, which was soon followed by death.¹

A scene of disgusting pillage took place in the royal chamber as soon as the King was dead, his servants seizing what they could.² It was left to William to take in hand the preparations for the obsequies; but the royal treasury was so depleted that he was unable to distribute to the poor the alms they always expected on the death of a great personage. Then, after informing Richard of his father's death, William had to await the coming of him whom he had last met on the field of battle.

¹ See for account of Henry's death *H.G.M.*, II. 9079-9112.

² *H.G.M.*, I. 9113 *et seq.* *Cf. Rog. of How.*, II, p. 367.

IV

WILLIAM IN THE REIGN OF RICHARD I 1189-1199

It was with no little anxiety that the followers of the late King awaited the arrival of his son. More especially did they fear for William Marshal who had so lately humiliated Richard. William made no attempt at flight, but remained by his dead master's body to await the coming crisis.

When the dread moment arrived Richard was outwardly so composed that none could divine from his visage what his mood might be. For a time he stood pensive regarding his father's body. Then taking aside Marshal and another noble, Maurice de Craon, he rebuked the former for having tried to slay him. No sign of fear escaped from William. Indeed, his attitude was one of surpassing boldness. Denying that he had attempted to slay Richard, he asserted that, had he so wished, he could certainly have done so. The very audacity of the remark must have touched a sympathetic chord in Richard's own character, for he immediately replied; 'You are pardoned, Marshal; I will harbour no malice against you'.¹ Nor were these mere words. Now, or soon afterwards,²

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 9340.

² See Benedict, II, p. 73, who places certain of Richard's donations and confirmations at his acceptance as Duke of Normandy.

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Richard confirmed to William the grant of the heiress of Striguil, Isabel of Pembroke, and her lands, declaring that he freely gave what his father had only promised. As soon as the royal obsequies were over, William and another envoy were despatched to England, to represent Richard before he crossed from Normandy, and to see that Eleanor was set at liberty.¹

For William Marshal, when he arrived in England, there was also a duty of a more pleasant and personal nature to perform. This was his marriage with Isabel and the seisin of the lands she brought him. Isabel was only about seventeen at the time of her marriage, while William was between forty and fifty. Little is recorded of the relationship between the middle-aged Marshal and his youthful wife. As a knight of renown rapidly rising in royal favour, he doubtless captured the imagination if not the love of the young Isabel. But whatever their personal feelings for each other may have been, the difference in age did not prevent the Marshal leaving behind him five sons and five daughters.

His marriage was in some respects the greatest stroke of fortune in the Marshal's life. From 'a landless man with nought but his knighthood' he

¹ *Dicto*, II, p. 67, speaks of Eleanor as regent. *H.G.M.*, I. 9350, says of William:

'Si pernez garde de ma terre
E de trestot mon autre afaire.'

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became a great Earl. Isabel was the descendant of Irish kings and at the same time the heiress of a family which had pushed its way far into south-west Wales. On her mother's side she was granddaughter of Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, while her father was Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, who by conquest and marriage had acquired Leinster and other lands in south Ireland. All her territories, in Ireland, Wales, and also in Normandy, she brought to her husband, although he was not formally invested with the earldom until the accession of King John.¹

In addition to the power William gained by the acquisition of such great lands, his position in the State was also growing in importance. At the coronation, which was carried out 'in such splendour and minute formality as to form a precedent for all subsequent ceremonies of the sort',² William carried the royal sceptre behind his brother, John the Marshal, who bore the golden spurs.³

Immediately the coronation was concluded, all possible haste was made with the arrangements for the Crusade. William was one of those who swore in the King's name to the agents of Philip Augustus that the arrangements made with him

¹ See p. 36.

² Stubbs. *C.H.*, I, p. 496. Cf. Norgate: *Eng. under Angev. Kings*, II, p. 276.

³ Benedict, II, p. 81. See also Dugdale: *Baronage*, p. 600.

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should be observed.¹ After several alterations in his original plans for the government of England in his absence, Richard finally left William Longchamp in charge as Justiciar. With him were associated as counsellors William Marshal and several others.² In return for money payment Richard had gained the release of certain of these from their crusaders' vows. Yet it seems extraordinary that William Marshal, with his great reputation as a warrior and in addition his experience and knowledge of the East, should have been left behind when King Richard set out on the expedition which to him was the dearest object of his life. The author of the *Histoire* mentions as a reason that William had already visited the Holy Land.³ Perhaps, however, William was left behind in England because the King had supreme faith in his loyalty, in the event of trouble or disaffection arising during his absence. If this was indeed the case events proved that Richard acted wisely. It was not long before Longchamp, now Legate

¹ *Hoveden* (III, p. 20) gives Marshal as correction for Mandeville as given in *Benedict* (II, p. 93). As Mandeville was now dead this correction speaks well for the accuracy of the authorities when used in conjunction. (Stubbs, Pref. *Hov.*, III.)

² *H.G.M.*, I, 9684. William is mentioned as a Justice in 1193 in *Epistolae Cantuarienses* (*Memorials, Richard I*, II, p. 363). Also see *Rog. of Hov.*, III, p. 16. *Diceto*, II, p. 90.

³ Thus William would probably consider that he had fulfilled his duty to the Holy Land. The idea of making a pilgrimage and then returning was prevalent to the detriment of the crusading armies. See Ambroise: *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, I, 7711.

William Marshal, First Earl of Pembroke as well as Justiciar, found himself faced with opposition to his rule, headed by Richard's brother John. Marshal seems to have sided with the opposition to Longchamp. Complaints were sent to the King at Messina,¹ whereupon Longchamp despatched a counter-charge, and even went so far as to name William Marshal as one of the disturbers of the peace. Richard refused to believe the charge, declaring that William was the most loyal man in his realm.

In 1191 the opposition at home was strong enough to depose Longchamp. Walter of Coutances, Archbishop of Rouen, who had been sent back by Richard to discover what was happening, now produced letters which he had previously concealed because of fear of the Justiciar. By reason of these royal letters Walter superseded Longchamp and William Marshal was associated with him in his duties.²

The opposition of John, however, was not merely to Longchamp but to the Government itself. Knowing in 1193 that Richard was the Emperor's prisoner, John was emboldened to take advantage of his absence.³ The Justiciar was compelled to take military measures against him. To the Justiciar's aid came William Marshal with others whom

¹ *Rog. of Hov.*, III, p. 96, says that William carried the barons' complaints to Messina, but this is not mentioned in *H.G.M.*

² See *H.G.M.*, I, 9872 *et seq.* Also Benedi&ct, II, p. 213.

³ John was also encouraged by Philip Augustus. Benedi&ct, II, p. 236

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he brought with him from the Welsh marches.¹ The revolt was doomed to failure as soon as the news that Richard was on his way home arrived. John betook himself to France. Men rallied to the King when he landed in March 1194; and Richard was at once eager to proceed to the siege of Nottingham which was still held against him.

William received the tidings of his Sovereign's safe return at the same time that he learnt of the death of his elder brother, John the Marshal. Amidst his grief—'Dex aie, Ker issi grant duel n'ici ge unques'²—and before the completion of his brother's funeral rites, William had to hurry away to meet the King, with whom he proceeded to Nottingham.

The surrender of Nottingham was not long delayed when the King moved against it in person. While still at Nottingham, Longchamp, who evidently had not forgiven William for his opposition, demanded that Marshal should do homage for his Irish lands. William, with his usual respect for strict feudal right, refused. He had, he declared, already done homage to John, as King of Ireland. It was a bold reply since John had fled to Richard's foe, the King of France. Nevertheless, once more the courage of the Marshal found favour with Richard, and William won his point against Longchamp.³

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 9902.

² *Ibid.*, l. 10037.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 10316 *et seq.*

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As soon as the revolt of John in England was at an end Richard prepared to set out against Philip Augustus. The English King blamed Philip of France for his intrigues with John, while Philip had brought from the East a hatred, writ deep in his heart,¹ for Richard. The one-time friendship had turned to rivalry, and by reason of the advantage he had taken of Richard's absence Philip was already in possession of the Norman Vexin.²

The war which was about to commence was really the beginning of a long struggle between the Kings of England and France for the possession of Normandy, which was not to terminate until the loss of the Duchy by John in 1204. Philip was prepared for the struggle; he was master in his own house, and could count upon the support of a number of family alliances which he had built up. Slowly-working factors, like the growth of nationality and the almost inevitable consolidation of the royal domain, were on his side. In reality, Richard, who spent the first part of his reign fighting for a lost cause in Palestine, was now to spend the other part in fighting for a losing cause in France.

While Richard lived, however, the English position in Normandy seemed by no means hopeless.

¹ See 'Anonyme de Bethune', p. 757.

² See Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 145.

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A great soldier, he brought to the task the experience and the skill in fortification which he had gained in Aquitaine and the Holy Land. In Normandy he was personally popular,¹ and with capable administrators, castellans, and a powerful force of mercenaries, he was able to do much to strengthen his position there.

On May 12, 1194, Richard sailed from Portsmouth to Barfleur.² Soon after his arrival in Normandy, John appeared and was reconciled with his brother. Richard's first operations were on the Norman frontier³. Next he hurried off to establish his authority in Touraine and Poitou.

William Marshal, doubtless accompanied by the faithful John d'Erlée, must have been with Richard during most of the operations that followed, though at certain times in these years we find William in England.⁴ On the occasion of the successful attack made upon the French at Fréteval in Vendôme in 1194, William by the King's order commanded a special troop held in reserve, in case the French should make a counter-attack, and he gained Richard's praise for his efficient protection of the rear.⁵

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 10436.

² *Rog. of Hov.*, III, p. 251.

³ At Verneuil and Beaumont-le-Roger. See *H.G.M.*, l. 10490 *et seq.*

⁴ In 1194 and 1198. Eyton: *Fines* LXIII. There are at this point sections in *H.G.M.* where William is scarcely mentioned.

⁵ *H.G.M.*, l. 10668. See also *Rog. of Hov.*, III, p. 225. He does not mention William's part in the engagement.

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After subduing Poitou, Richard returned to Normandy.¹ There was a truce during the year 1195, but war broke out again in 1196, and William was with the King at the siege of Vierzon in Berri. Richard, about this time, devoted himself to strengthening his castles. In particular he built Château-Gaillard which was to be henceforth the centre of a system of defences in the valley of the Seine. He also sought to gather round himself a number of allies and with this end in view William was sent to win over the Counts of Boulogne and Flanders.² Much to the annoyance of Philip he was successful. The French King being thus faced with enemies on two fronts was forced to retreat, the good news being sent to Richard by William's nephew John.³

The desultory warfare continued during the next two years. The French suffered a reverse at Gisors⁴ and two expeditions were made, one against Milli in the Beauvaisais and the other against a place of the name of Semilli.⁵

The attack on the castle of Milli was rendered notable by the conspicuous daring of the Marshal.

¹ See Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 154.

² *Ibid.*, p. 177. *H.G.M.*, I. The King chose 'De plus prodhomes de sa terre'.

³ *H.G.M.*, I. 10916.

⁴ In 1197 or 1198. *H.G.M.*, III, p. lxvi. *Reg. of Hov.* gives 1198. See also Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 180.

⁵ *H.G.M.*, I. 11116. M. Meyer cannot identify Semilli. Again there is uncertainty as to the date. See III, p. lxvi and p. 148, note.

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Seeing one of the attacking knights in difficulty, William leapt into the foss and climbed to his assistance. Here, before he could be followed by those behind him, he was encountered by the Constable of the Castle. But William struck the latter such a blow that he fell senseless and then, fatigued by his effort, he sat down upon the Constable's prostrate body, to await the coming of Richard to whom he offered the prisoner. The King rebuked the Marshal for risking his valuable life, declaring that such enterprises should be left to young men whose valour had not been proved. Philip, now tiring of the warfare, opened negotiations¹ with the Pope, which resulted in a meeting between Richard and a legate, Peter of Capua. The interview was a stormy one, the King's anger being so terrible that the Legate fled from his presence.² Acting on William's advice, however, Richard ultimately accepted the terms offered by the Legate on behalf of the King of France, and in 1199 a truce was arranged for a term of five years.³

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 11355. An interesting reference is made to the necessity of the intervention in negotiation with the Papal court of St. Rufin and St. Albin (gold and silver).

² The King was enraged by the Legate's reference at the interview to the captivity of the Bishop of Beauvais, and also by the argument that peace must be made in order to further a crusade. Richard fiercely asserted that it was because of Philip's intrigues that he had been compelled to return from his (i.e., Richard's) crusade.

³ Philip was to hold in gage the castles of Normandy of which he was in possession, but not the territory outside the castles. As Prof. Powicke remarks, 'It is curious to reflect that within the five years proposed Normandy was lost'.

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Soon afterwards (March 26, 1199) Richard was mortally wounded outside the castle of Chaluz in the Limousin. It was in a kind of petty treasure-hunt, arising out of a minor dispute with a vassal, that the great crusading warrior met his end, one of his last acts being the despatch of sealed letters to William Marshal, informing him of the serious nature of his wound, and imploring him to guard the tower of Rouen where his treasure lay.

Three days afterwards William received news of the King's death. He hastened to confer with the Archbishop Walter,¹ the question of the succession being uppermost in their minds. At the suggestion that Arthur, son of Geoffrey and Constance of Brittany, and grandson of Henry II, should be chosen king, Marshal exclaimed: 'Ha, Sir, methinks this would be wrong; Arthur is led by evil counsellors; he is proud and haughty, and loves not the English'. Strongly urging these considerations and the claims of John as nearest heir, William won over the Archbishop to his view, though not before the latter had uttered a grave warning that he would live to regret the course he was taking.

William's loyalty at this critical time was very

¹ Whether Walter of Rouen or Hubert Walter of Canterbury is clear. Norgate (*John Lackland*, p. 57) thinks it was the former, since the latter, being an Englishman, would have declared for John. But see also Meyer's view in *H.G.M.*, III, p. lxxi. and p. 159 note. Also see Powicke: *Stephen Langton*, pp. 110, 111.

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acceptable to John. Nevertheless, its importance must not be exaggerated, as in England there was no hesitation in regard to the succession.¹ John at once sent over Archbishop Hubert Walter and William Marshal to secure the allegiance of the barons in the council which was held at Northampton.²

¹ Norgate: *John Lackland*, p. 64.

² *Rog. of Hov.*, IV

V

THE LOSS OF NORMANDY, 1199-1204

THE accession of John did not bring about any immediate change in the course of William Marshal's life, for until the loss of Normandy, he continued to be principally employed on the Continent. At the coronation he was formally invested with the Earldom of Pembroke;¹ in 1200 the office of Marshal was confirmed to him by Royal Charter;² and among other tokens of royal favour received about the same time was the sherifffdom of Gloucester;³ while in 1201 he was granted the wardship of the Castle of Cardigan and the land of William Pipart.⁴

With John in Richard's place the old struggle with Philip of France entered upon a new stage. John was far the inferior of his brother, both in the power of personal attraction and in the capacity for sustained military activity. Moreover, the claims of Arthur of Brittany meant that Normandy now lay between two fires. Philip saw his opportunity, but the royal domain of France being faced by an interdict, he was unable at the moment to follow up his demands by force, and the treaty

¹ *Rog. of Hov.*, IV, 90. *Annales Cambriae*, p. 62.

² *Rot. Charte.*, I, 46.

³ Dugdale: *Baronage*, I, 601.

⁴ *Rotuli de liberate*, pp. 27, 71-2.

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of Le Goulet was arranged. The French King, however, was only biding his time; soon finding another pretext¹ for war, he commenced a series of raids upon eastern Normandy.

While Philip was thus engaged John had marched south, where, after being only just in time to save his mother Eleanor from capture at Mirabeau, the tables were turned and Arthur himself was taken prisoner. A monk was immediately sent to bear the news to William Marshal who, with the Earls of Salisbury and Warenne, was watching Philip's movements in the North.²

But John's success in capturing Arthur seemed to turn to his disadvantage. It was followed by an epidemic of disloyalty, one of the most important of the deserters being William de Roches, the Seneschal of Anjou,³ who had bargained for the personal safety of Arthur. The minds of the Normans were unsettled.⁴ Many were alienated by John's caprice, or the behaviour of his mercen-

¹ In the marriage of John with Isabella of Angoulême and the appeal of the Poitevin barons to Philip. See *Coggeshall*, p. 126, as to the summons of John to the court of the King of France. This is questioned by Miss Norgate, but see Petit-Dutaillis, *Stud. supp. to Stubbs*.

² Upon hearing the news Philip raised the siege of Arques and retreated, but the Marshal's forces were not sufficiently strong for an engagement.

³ See Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 226-7. By this defection John eventually lost the opportunity of making Anjou a strategic centre for the defence of Normandy. Philip was thereby enabled to operate against it in greater security.

⁴ For list of the Norman deserters, see Powicke: *Ibid.*, p. 258.

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aries; by his querulous vacillation, or the contrast between his unregulated energy and his periods of unintelligible indolence.¹ The mysterious disappearance of Arthur added another factor of uncertainty to the situation. In spite of the comparative strength of the military position, which Richard had done much to improve, John failed to rally the nobles to his side. Thus those who found themselves threatened by the power of Philip, and saw nothing in the character of John to attract them to him, were strongly tempted to desert. We do not find William Marshal at this time taking the active part in the defence of the Duchy which might have been expected of him, but apparently he was given no authority or encouragement to make a vigorous resistance.²

Philip was determined to push the attack to a final conclusion. He refused the request for a truce made by the Marshal, who was sent to negotiate with him at Conches,³ and, moreover, firmly turned aside the efforts of the Pope to bring about an arrangement. In August 1203 he laid siege to

¹ In 1202 John kept his Christmas court at Caen, faring sumptuously and prolonging his slumbers until midday. In 1203, when receiving news of the capture of one castle after another by Philip, he replied, 'Let him alone. Some day I shall regain all he is taking from me now'. See *Reg. of Wend.*, I, pp. 316, 317.

² What real resistance there was displayed itself in the defence of castles and the tenacity of their guardians, men like the Constable of Chester or Girard d'Athée.

³ *H.G.M.*, I. 12675.

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Château-Gaillard. At length John roused himself, and made an attempt to relieve the fortress by launching an attack against Philip while the latter was engaged in the preliminary work of blocking the advanced fortifications at Radepont and Andeli. What part, if any, William Marshal played in this action is a matter of uncertainty. According to the *Philippide*, William was in command of a large and somewhat unwieldy force which advanced under cover of night, but doubt is thrown on the authenticity of the poem in this respect by the very exaggeration of the account it gives, together with the fact that the part said to have been taken by the Marshal is not mentioned elsewhere.¹

But for an unfortunate miscalculation² the operation might have been a brilliant success. The upshot was, however, that the French not only repulsed the attack, but also in the confusion succeeded in capturing the island fort of Andeli.

¹ (a) Miss Norgate (*John*, p. 96) follows the *Philippide*, Bk. VII, I, 144 :—'Ergo marescallo cordis secreta revelans', etc.; and regards the plan as a masterpiece of ingenuity.

(b) M. Meyer (III, p. lxxvi) doubts the 'pompeux discours' of the *Philippide* and pours ridicule on the possibility of a night attack with so large a body of troops. To him this story is an exaggerated account of the simple statement made in the prose chronicle by the same author as the *Philippide*.

(c) H.G.M. does not mention the expedition. Is this perhaps because on this occasion William was leader of an expedition that failed?

² A mistake made in the time of the tide, in consequence of which the boats arrived too late to co-operate effectively with the land forces.

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With the failure of the English to relieve Château-Gaillard the defence of Normandy was virtually at an end. William openly advised the King that he had no longer friends enough to continue the struggle. John replied characteristically with a taunt. 'He who is afraid, let him flee', he said. The Marshal boldly declared that the King had never taken sufficient care to avoid irritating and offending his followers; and if only he had not alienated so many, things would have been better for all. In a fit of temper John fled to his chamber. Next morning he could not be found. He had departed secretly without a word to his followers or servants.¹ After delaying some months in Normandy the King sailed for England at the end of 1203. In March of the following year the heroic defence of Château-Gaillard came to an end. Philip marched off to occupy Argentan, Falaise, and Caen. In June, Rouen surrendered. Normandy was lost.

¹ *H.G.M.*, ll. 12720-56.

VI

THE EARL AND KING JOHN, 1204-1216

WILLIAM MARSHAL was now about sixty years old and the loss of Normandy marks the end of that long period of his career which was so largely occupied in some form of combat on the other side of the channel. After 1204, William never again drew sword outside the British Isles. He crossed to France again on but three occasions, and as an ambassador not as warrior. Henceforth he lived in England, attended at the Court, fulfilled official duties, or occupied himself with his own affairs in Wales and Ireland.¹

The years that followed the loss of Normandy are noteworthy in the Marshal's life as covering the period when this most faithful counsellor of English kings did not enjoy the Royal favour. During this time the loyalty, honesty, and powerful sense of feudal obligation which distinguished the Marshal, are shown up in strong relief against the hasty, spiteful, and conspicuously ungrateful behaviour of King John.² It is, indeed, during these years from 1204 to 1216, when his loyalty was so severely tested by the King's suspicion and

¹ *H.G.M.*, see Meyer's *Itinerary*, Intros. III, p. cli.

² Many stories illustrating the meanness of John's character are given in *H.G.M.*; see particularly l. 13804.

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open acts of hostility, that the steadfastness of the Marshal's character is most clearly displayed.

After the fall of Château-Gaillard John made an attempt to open negotiations with Philip of France. He sent over a commission, on which among others were the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Earls of Pembroke (William Marshal) and Leicester. The negotiations, as far as Philip was concerned, were a mere farce, but he made a definite offer to the two Earls. By doing homage to Philip for their lands they were to receive from him confirmation of their tenure.¹ William therefore agreed that 'he will immediately deliver to his lord the King of the French the castle and fortress of Orbec . . . and to Obert de Rovreis the castles and fortresses of Longueville and Moulliers . . . providing that if the Earl before the middle of the following May (1205) shall come to the King and do liege homage against all men for the castles, they, with his land, shall be restored him. . . . And for this respite the Earl gives the King 500 marcs of silver'.²

In the following year (1205) William was again sent on a mission to negotiate with the French King who reminded him that his year of grace was nearly up. Apparently thinking that on this occasion satisfactory terms of agreement would be

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 12869.

² *Cal. Docs. France* (T. H. Round), p. 475.

The Earl and King John

reached, the Marshal did homage as the King of France required. Unfortunately, however, no agreement followed,¹ and John was thus provided with a double excuse for a quarrel. William had failed in his mission, and he had done homage to the King's bitterest foe, who had just robbed him of his duchy.

Shortly afterwards John ordered the Earl to prepare to accompany him on an expedition into Poitou to attack Philip. 'Ah! Sire,' cried William, 'that would be wrong, since I am his man'. The scene became heated, John denying and William asserting his loyalty. At length the King appealed to the barons, his object being to provoke someone to challenge the Earl² and to obtain sentence against him. Baldwin of Bethune dared to speak out. 'There is none fit to judge a knight of such valour as the Marshal,'³ boldly declared William's old and trusty friend. Yielding to persuasion, the King abandoned his intention of going to Poitou,⁴ but he took the Earl's eldest son, William, as hostage.

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 12995 *et seq.* The Archbishop of Canterbury is stated to have told Philip that the Marshal had no authority to make terms with him, whereupon the latter and his embassy were dismissed.

² *Ibid.*, l. 13256.

³ *Ibid.*, ll. 13108-256. Prof. Powicke (see *Loss of Normandy* p. 432) regards this as one of its most striking passages.

⁴ He went, however, in the following year (1206) and left the land in the care of the Marshal (amongst others), thus showing that in spite of his suspicion he was ready to make use of the Earl when his services were needed.

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William's attitude in regard to these differences with King John is noteworthy. He had been able to make a private agreement to serve two masters, a privilege given to few in the general confiscation of territories which took place.¹ His courage was marked, as was his sense of feudal obligation. He did not quail before John's anger because he was loyal at heart. Yet he would not march against Philip to whom he had done homage. Though in the eyes of contemporaries² the situation was difficult there can be no question of the Earl's loyalty, to John as King, and to Philip as overlord of his French lands. Clearly William's idea of duty was an entirely feudal conception. A great warrior and statesman of the twelfth century, the future 'rector Angliæ' had not 'the faintest conception of what we call patriotism, or nationality, or treason'.³

The King continued to treat the Earl with suspicion, and it was only after sending his second son Richard⁴ to join his elder brother as hostage

¹ See Petit-Dutaillis: *Essays in Med. Hist. pres. to Tout*, p. 100. Also Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 430-5.

² Even the Earl's friend, Baldwin of Bethune, had told the King that 'had the barons offered to serve Philip with their bodies and him with their hearts, he (Baldwin) would have thrown those same hearts into the privy'. See *Histoire des Ducs*, p. 99.

³ Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 433.

⁴ Before doing so William took counsel with the barons who were opposed to the young Richard being sent, but the Earl decided to give further proof of his loyalty. For Letters Pat. protecting the lands of W.M. and John d'Erlée during their absence see *Cal. Docs. Ireland*, No. 313.

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that William succeeded in gaining the royal permission to cross over to Ireland in the early part of 1207. The arrival of so powerful an Earl in Ireland, where he was received with great honour, aroused the jealousy of Meiler FitzHenry, one of William's liegemen, but at the same time Justiciar of Ireland.¹ The latter prevailed upon the King to recall the Earl, who, before departing, left his lands to the care of his friends, among them being John d'Erlée. Having assembled the nobles of his territory, William announced that he was leaving among them his wife, the Countess Isabel, to whom he secured promises of their fidelity as their lady, the daughter and heiress of Earl Strongbow, who had enfeoffed them.²

Meiler also came over to England and succeeded in gaining the King's ear; the latter thus became a party to the intrigues against William and his men which Meiler was fostering in Ireland.³ There now arose a peculiar state of affairs, only possible in an age of slow and difficult communication and in a society bound together by feudal ties very different from the obligations of nationality and patriotism which obtain to-day. While the Marshal was following the itinerary of the royal Court in England,⁴ in Ireland there was open war

¹ See *D.N.B.* and *Cal. Docs.*, No. 133. ² *H.G.M.*, II. 13472-550.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 13589 *et seq.* describes the project agreed to by the King, in counsel with Girard d'Athée, Meiler, and others.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 13787.

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between his men and those of the Justiciar Meiler, the King's officer, who had stirred up this strife with the tacit approval of the King himself.

In February 1208 news¹ was received that the Justiciar had been defeated and captured and compelled to submit to the Countess and the Marshal's men. Concealing his disappointment at the news, and finding that fortune was favouring the Earl, the King, as was his custom, changed his attitude. He became more friendly towards William, and in the following month with the royal permission the latter set out again for Ireland, where he appears to have given proof of his nobility of character by his generous treatment of those who had fought against him.²

During the remaining part of 1208 and the whole of 1209 William was probably in Ireland attending to his affairs, but little is known of his doings. It may be that during this period occurred the quarrel recounted by Matthew Paris³ between the Marshal and the Bishop of Ferns, by whom William was excommunicated for having refused to restore to the Bishop certain lands seized during

¹ Before reliable news arrived the King is stated to have annoyed and deceived William by giving out false news as to the defeat of his men and the death of John d'Erlée. See *H.G.M.*, I. 13804.

² The King appointed a new Justiciar and Meiler was reconciled to W.M. after surrendering a castle and promising his lands at his death.

³ *M.P. Chronica Majora*, IV, p. 492. . . . According to the story it was because of the Bishop's curse that William's five sons died without heirs.

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warfare. William probably believed himself fully in the right, for the excommunication seems to have worried him little.

In 1210 another cause of trouble between William and the King arose. John had quarrelled with William de Braose (a powerful Marcher lord and a connection of William's by marriage) on a question of debt, and commenced active measures against him.¹ De Braose² with his wife and children fled to Ireland where they were received by the Marshal who was then at Wicklow. In spite of the demand of the Justiciar, John de Grey (who had displaced Meiler) William refused to give up the fugitives.

Upon hearing this King John was greatly irritated and alarmed. He summoned an army and crossed to Ireland. In Dublin there was a dramatic scene between the King and the Marshal. 'Sire,' said the latter, 'I sheltered my seigneur, when he came to me. . . . I had no evil intention. . . . I did not know that you had anything against him. . . . If anyone save you holds differently I am ready to defend myself, following the judgment of your Court'.³ But the barons who were present remained silent.

¹ Matilda, the wife of De Braose had also irritated the King. When, hostages had been demanded she replied that she would not send her children to the murderer of Arthur. *M.P. Chron. Maj.*, II, 523-4. See also Meyer's note, III, p. 195.

² 'The worst of the Marchers.' See Bowen-Hamer: *Radnorshire*.

³ *H.G.M.*, I. 14296 *et seq.*

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Once more the suspicious King was forced to bridle his temper. However, he demanded hostages, amongst those accepted being the faithful John d'Erlée. The Marshal had also to surrender to the King the castle of Dumas in Ireland.¹ After this incident William remained in Ireland for a year or two, during which time there is no record of his life.

In the meantime John was threatened with trouble in Wales,² which he invaded in 1211. A second expedition prepared in the succeeding year came to nothing owing to more serious trouble in England.³ It was in connection with one of these expeditions that the Earl was sent for and admitted again to the King's favour, certain of the hostages being returned.⁴ Although William during this period seems to have made his home in Ireland, the King did not hesitate to send for him, when needing his assistance.⁵

It was the dire need of the King that in May 1213 caused the Earl to be summoned to England, when his two sons who were still hostages were

¹ See note 1, p. 195, Meyer, III.

² Due to growing power of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Gwynedd.

³ Lloyd: *History of Wales*, p. 631 *et seq.*

⁴ Meyer, III, p. 200, No. 1.

⁵ See *H.G.M., Itinerary*, III, p. clii, and l. 14480. After the Pope had excommunicated John and proposed to absolve his subjects from their allegiance, the magnates of Ireland, headed by W.M., had issued a manifesto in the King's favour. See *Cal. Docs. Ireland*, 448.

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given up.¹ This time William remained² as one of the principal counsellors of King John, who was now in serious straits, being under excommunication by the Pope, threatened by a French invasion, and at the same time unable to trust his barons at home.³ By his submission to the Pope, however, the King for the time being outwitted his enemies, and the name of William Marshal appears amongst those who attested the charter of reconciliation.⁴ For some years John had been building up a European coalition against Philip of France. Having made terms with the Pope, and the danger of invasion having been averted by the defeat of the French fleet in 1213, it now appeared that the time for action on land had arrived. Accordingly, early in 1214 the King set out on an expedition to Poitou, the country being left in the care of the Marshal and other barons.⁵ John's plans, however, completely broke down with the signal defeat of the allied army under the Emperor Otto at Bouvines. The King, therefore, returned to

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 14532, and notes 2 and 3.

² *Cal. Docs. Ireland*, 465. Protection of his lands secured by Letters Patent.

³ See Norgate: *John Lackland*, for letters of warning from the King's daughter, Joan, and William, King of Scots, which caused the abandonment of John's Welsh invasion.

⁴ For the reconciliation see Norgate: *Ibid.*, p. 180. John surrendered the realms of England and Ireland to God and the Catholic Church through Pope Innocent.

⁵ Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, was Justiciar. Norgate, *Ibid.*, p. 196.

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England, where he had to reckon with the barons who were now bent upon bringing him to a definite agreement with themselves.

In the struggle between John and the barons William Marshal maintained his attitude of unwavering loyalty.¹ But from what we know of his character we may safely assume that he was a wise counsellor and used his influence with the King on the side of justice and moderation.² The King, knowing by this time the great prestige of the Marshal, employed him as a pledge and intermediary in his negotiations with the baronial party. In the meeting with the barons which took place early in 1215³, William, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely, became surety for the King that he would give due satisfaction on the day appointed.

In the meantime John secured the support and interest of the Pope, and the barons despairing of his intentions took up arms at Stamford. The Marshal acted as intermediary, and carried to the King the demands made by the barons.⁴ In spite of William's advice to the contrary,⁵ the King rejected the demands. The insurgent barons, however, were too strong. They gained possession of

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 15053. See also *Rog. of Wend.*, II, p. 117.

² The *Histoire* gives little about the struggle. The Marshal's family was divided in the civil strife, and probably the poet had reason for keeping a discreet silence on awkward events. See I. 15036, 'Aing me porreit a mal monter'.

³ *Rog. of Wend.*, II, 112.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 115.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 116.

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London. Administration throughout the country was coming to a standstill. At last John was compelled 'for the sake of peace' to send William Marshal with a message to the barons that the King was willing to grant their wishes. Thus a meeting took place at Runnymede and the Charter was granted.¹ To it the Marshal put his name as witness.²

But the granting of the Charter was little more than a truce in what was a struggle between King and barons, rather than King and people.³ When John obtained from the Pope a sentence quashing the Charter, and forbidding its observance by either the King or the barons, the latter realized that they were faced with a struggle to the bitter end. They turned for help to Louis, son of the French King, and the Marshal's mission to France, in an endeavour to prevent the coming invasion, failed.⁴ Louis had already been on English soil for some months,⁵ when King John suddenly became ill and died. 'For God's sake,' cried the dying and now penitent King to those around him, 'pray the

¹ *Rog. of Wend.*, II, 118.

² Stubbs: *S.C.*

³ See *Hist. des Ducs*. John granted the Charter 'Comme chil qui amende ne le pot', also *H.G.M.*, I, 15038, and Petit-Dutaillis, p. 131.

⁴ *R. Coggeshall*, pp. 180-1. Louis's expedition was, of course, forbidden by the Pope. See *Rog. of Wend.*, II, 177.

⁵ John's idea of a pitched battle with the French immediately they landed was given up on the Marshal's advice, the forces that could be relied on being chiefly foreigners and mercenaries. *Annales Dumst.*, a. 1215 (in *Annales Monastici*).

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Marshal to pardon the wrongs I have done him . . . and since I am more sure of his loyalty than that of any other man, I pray you give him the care of my son.'¹

¹ William's eldest son had joined Louis, but his own loyalty was unshaken to the end. *H.G.M.*, l. 15122.

VII

‘RECTOR REGIS ET REGNI!’ 1216-1219

AFTER the death of King John, William Marshal had less than three years to live,¹ but it was his work in this brief space that established his reputation as soldier and statesman and won for him the important place he occupies in English history. He had already the repute of the true knight; he had proved his loyalty under three kings; he was trusted and respected at home and abroad. Now he was called upon to occupy a position which was new in the constitutional history of the realm, and which imposed the severest test upon his courage and judgment.

The outlook was indeed menacing. The King had died suddenly; his heir was but nine years old; nearly half his kingdom was in the hands of the son of Philip Augustus; the administration of the realm was in a chaotic condition; the treasury was almost empty.

The situation might well have seemed hopeless; but in reality John's death released his adherents from an awkward predicament.² The young Henry was innocent of his father's misdeeds, and

¹ John died October 18 or 19, 1216. William Marshal died May 14, 1219.

² *Reg. of Wend.*, ‘Qui moriens multum sedavit in orbe tumultum.’

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for a revolt against him the insurgent barons had not the excuse of broken feudal customs, and the wrongful exercise of arbitrary power.¹ With the Church John had made his peace; his son was therefore under the Church's protection—almost as a ward. With these considerations in mind Louis' intervention appeared in a different light—rather as a war of conquest carried out in defiance of ecclesiastical prohibition. By the efforts of the Legate Gualo and the Marshal, Louis was thus placed in the position of a foreign invader, instead of being leader of the barons against a king who oppressed them.

After the interment of the late King, his adherents gathered at Gloucester for the coronation of his successor. The knightng of the boy was entrusted to William the Marshal. Their choice of one who would undertake the care of the young King and the government of the kingdom lay between the Marshal and the Earl of Chester. It was clear that the position would be one of enormous difficulty and responsibility.² 'Take it upon you, Sir Earl of Chester, for God's sake,' cried William, who excused himself from so heavy a task on the ground of his age. The Earl of Chester, however,

¹ This was the argument used by William Marshal, '*Quia patris iniquitas . . . filio non debuit imputari.*' *Reg. of Wend.*, II, p. 198.

² Even at the coronation William received tidings that his castle at Goodrich, but twelve miles distant, was besieged.

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was reluctant to occupy a place which he clearly saw should fall to the Marshal.

At last, by the persuasion of the Legate Gualo, who urged him to undertake the charge for the pardon and remission of his sins, William agreed. 'In God's name,' he said, 'if I am saved from my sins, this charge befits me well. I will take it, however burdensome it may be'. Thus it was that the Marshal received 'the King and the guardianship both together'.¹ Whereupon, with great forethought for the young King's safety and comfort, William confided him to the care of the Bishop of Winchester, declaring that one so young could not always be with him in the journeyings from place to place which his position would now entail.

Papal letters and the activities of Gualo show that the hand of the Church was behind the Marshal.² At first he was styled Justiciar, but later this title was dropped³ and William became 'rector regis et regni'. The magnates, assembled at Gloucester, set up, with the approval of the Legate, what we

¹ *H.G.M.*, ll. 15313-561. *Reg. of Wend.*, II, p. 198. 'Rex autem post coronationem suam remansit in custodia Willelmi comitis Pembroc, magni videlicet Mareschalli.' *Hist. des Ducs.*: W.M. was 'eslius à iestre souverains baillius del regne'.

² *Cal. Papal Letters*, I, 42. *Walter of Cov.*, II, 233-4.

³ To obviate confusion with the position of Hubert de Burgh who had been John's Justiciar. Turner says: 'he derived his office as guardian of the King and his realm, or, as he was at first styled, Justiciar, from the appointment of the magnates at Gloucester, made with the approval of Gualo'.

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should call a regency; because it was an unprecedented step they had difficulty in finding a name for it.¹

The Marshal immediately took up his duties.² In the work of the regency he was assisted by the Legate and certain of the magnates, but exactly to what extent it would be difficult to say. It was 'by William Marshal and the magnates of the Council' that grants and appointments were frequently made. But this Council was an indefinite body; a shifting group of bishops, barons, and officers;³ and in the critical conditions of the time the main responsibility must have fallen upon the Marshal. Besides, the young King had no seal, and the Marshal, as guardian of the kingdom, attested royal letters in his own name until a new seal was made towards the end of 1218. It follows, therefore, whatever part the Council took in ruling the kingdom, that acts done in the King's name must have required William's consent⁴ and that he was accordingly in a position to control the general policy of the country.

It was after the land had been pacified, and when the Marshal and his associates must have perceived that his rule would soon be closed by

¹ See Norgate: *J.L.*, p. 70.

² See *Cal. Pat. Rolls* for his administrative orders—release of prisoners; letters of safe conduct; castles to be given over, etc.

³ See Baldwin: *King's Council*, Chap. 2.

⁴ Practically all royal acts were attested by William Marshal. See Norgate, *J.L.*, p. 72, and *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 9, for an exception.

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death, that the great seal of Henry III was made, and since there was a ‘well-established rule of English law’ that a grant in perpetuity could not be made by an infant,¹ letters patent were issued safeguarding the land against the misuse of the seal in this connection. This guarantee was secured by a declaration that no grant in perpetuity was to be sealed with it ‘usque ad etatem nostram completam’.²

During the period when William was using his own seal in attesting royal letters, the question of the royal seal and its care did not arise; but when the letters patent regulating the use of the King’s new seal were issued in November 1218, the keeping of the seal became a matter of first importance. Before the Marshal’s death it was in the hands of Ralph Nevil, as Vice-Chancellor. The latter officer at this time was an official dependent on the King rather than one acting as deputy to the Chancellor.³ Thus the Vice-Chancellor must have been dependent on William Marshal as Regent. The importance attached to the seal and its keeping in the administrative machinery is apparent from the attitude of the Legate on the Marshal’s death. The letters of Pandulf (who had succeeded Gualo as Legate) and Hubert de Burgh indicate that both regarded the Vice-Chancellor and the

¹ Turner: *T.R.H.S.*, p. 279.

² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 177.

³ Powicke: *E.H.R.*, XXIII, p. 226.

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Treasurer as the officials in control of the situation.¹ The vital question was that the great seal should be safe when the authority of the Marshal had ceased with his death.

After the coronation the despatch of letters to the sheriffs and castellans throughout the country, urging them to adhere to the cause of the new King, was the Marshal's first care.²

Meanwhile a Council had been summoned. It met at Bristol on November 11, 1216, and comprised practically the whole strength of the Royalist party.³ Here was published the first reissue of the Great Charter in the name of the new King, under the seals of the Legate and William Marshal. Thus the Pope, who had quashed the Charter of John, now in the person of his legate, sanctioned the Marshal's re-issue. The fact that the Marshal and the Legate were now pledged to use their authority to maintain the feudal rights set out in the Charter was calculated to have a reassuring effect on the loyalists, as well as being an inducement to the barons who were amongst Louis' supporters to reconsider their position.

In this reissue of the Charter certain clauses contained in the original issue were omitted,⁴ notably

¹ Shirley: *Royal Letters*, I, pp. 112, 116. See also Powicke (*E.H.R.*), who corrects the dates given by Shirley, and emphasises the anxiety of the Legate for the safety of the great seal.

² *Reg. of Wend.*, II p. 198.

³ Norgate: *Henry III*, p. 9.

⁴ See Stubbs: *S.C., M.C., and its reissue*.

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those relating to taxation and the farm of the counties. With a half-empty treasury and exchequer administration at a standstill, the Marshal could not afford to tie his hands in the matter of taxation. The clause regarding the summoning of the Council and the ‘Forma securitas’ at the end of the Charter were also omitted. The barons had stipulated with John that the relatives of Gerard d’Athée should be removed from their bailliwicks, and that all alien knights, crossbowmen, serjeants, and mercenaries should be banished from the realm. These men, however, were on the young King’s side, and those who now issued the Charter could not afford to lose their military services, since at this time castellans took the chief part in the work of war.¹

William next turned his attention to the war with Louis. This struggle was essentially a war of sieges, marked by two outstanding actions—the rout of the French at Lincoln and the defeat of their fleet near Sandwich. At first the advantage seemed to lie almost entirely with Louis. The French party held London, the chief castles of Surrey and Hampshire, as well as the important

¹ Turner, *T.R.H.S.*, p. 254. For a full discussion of Mr. Turner’s theory that the sheriffs and castellans claimed to hold their bailliwicks throughout a King’s minority, see Norgate: *Henry III.*, note vi, p. 280. It was not that the Marshal had not the right to remove these officers; but rather that it would have been most imprudent to have done so at this time. See also *Hist. des Ducs.*, which mentions a number of the castellans and their castles.

William Marshal, First Earl of Pembroke fortress of Mountsorel in Leicestershire and most of the castles of Yorkshire. Louis, however, was in a foreign land. His communications and transport of supplies were difficult and continually harassed.

William, by playing a waiting game, and directing his immediate efforts to winning over some of the hostile barons, brought into action on his side forces which in the long run were of vital importance. By allowing Louis to take a number of the eastern castles¹ and so disperse his forces, the Marshal was able to concentrate his men and was thus prepared for immediate action when the opportunity offered. On the other hand Louis completed his control over eastern England, where Lincoln remained the only real obstacle in his path.

The temporary absence of Louis in France² in the early part of 1217 damaged his cause in England, as it gave an opportunity to many waverers to come over to the young Henry's party.³ During his absence a number of castles in the south of England were besieged and captured, including

¹ Several truces were negotiated, each on the basis of the delivery of castles by the Royalist party. See *H.G.M.*, II. 15717-751; also Norgate, pp. 18, 19.

² Before crossing to France he narrowly escaped capture at Winchester, *H.G.M.*, I. 15834, and his troops were harassed by Wilkin of the Weald.

³ *Hist. des Ducs.*, p. 187. *H.G.M.*, I. 15878. It was at this time that the Marshal's eldest son and the Earl of Salisbury joined him.

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Farnham which was taken by the Marshal himself; while forces were sent to lay siege to Mountsorel.¹

These tidings brought Louis back from France. He now divided his army, sending a part to relieve Mountsorel,² and going himself with the remainder to besiege Dover. The former forces, having succeeded in their object,³ afterwards marched on to besiege Lincoln, whose castle was still holding out.

The siege of Lincoln Castle by the French suggested to the Marshal a bold step. The French army was divided; Louis himself was in another part of the country. Now, therefore, was the opportunity for a vigorous attack upon the French forces gathered at Lincoln. At Northampton, in council with the chief men of his party, the Marshal in stirring words outlined his plan, and fired all with enthusiasm for its execution.⁴ The Royal troops mustered at Newark.⁵ The Legate excommunicated those on the French side, while giving absolution to all on the Royalist side, who

¹ For account of the sieges see *H.G.M.*, II. 15889 *et seq.*; and *Hist. des Ducs.*, pp. 187-8.

² *Hist. des Ducs.*, p. 190.

³ The besieging troops, thinking that Louis himself had come against them, retired to Nottingham.

⁴ *H.G.M.*, II. 16115-91.

⁵ *Rog. of Wend.*, II. 211-2. ‘Principes autem exercitus fuerunt Willelmus Marescallus et Willelmus filius ejus, Petrus Wintoniensis episcopus . . .’

William Marshal, First Earl of Pembroke had made a true confession.¹ The English army was not numerous but the harangue delivered by the Marshal raised their enthusiasm to a fiery pitch.

An example of the difficulties the Marshal had to contend with is to be found in the dangerous dispute which arose just before the battle. The Normans in the host claimed that it was always their privilege to strike the first blows, while the Earl of Chester declared that, if he were not to fight in the first line, he would take no part in the action. Apparently the dispute was settled by the latter gaining his point.²

As the Royalist army approached the city the French, doubtful of its strength, retired inside the walls and closed the gates, instead of meeting the attacking forces in the field. Meanwhile the French forces already inside the city were pressing the siege of the castle, in order to capture it if possible before the arrival of relief.³ In the battle that followed the Marshal himself took a prominent part. On hearing of a breach in the walls, 'Charge!' he cried, 'They are beaten already. Shame to those who will delay.'⁴ He spurred on his horse and 'as swift as a bird and as fierce as a

¹ *H.G.M.*, l. 16225. *Reg. of Wend.*, II, 213.

² *Ibid.*, l. 16221.

³ The story of the 'Fair of Lincoln' as recounted in *H.G.M.* presents many difficulties. For a discussion of these see Tout: *Fair of Lincoln* (*E.H.R.*, No. 18).

⁴ *H.G.M.*, l. 16577.

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hungry lion’ dashed upon the foe. The advance of the Marshal’s troops was, however, fiercely contested as they passed along the narrow streets.¹

At length the French and their supporters were forced to flee, and the flight became a rout. The Marshal’s victory was decisive. The Earl of Winchester and many others of the chief men on the French side were taken prisoners. The city of Lincoln was sacked but not, we may believe, with the consent of the Marshal, who had hastened off to carry the news of the victory to the Legate and the young King at Nottingham. Next morning came the news that the garrison of Mountsorel had fled. Thus the Royalist position in the North was secured.

To Louis the news of the ‘Fair of Lincoln’ must have meant the augury of defeat. He raised the siege of Dover, concentrated his forces in London, and sent an urgent appeal for help to his father and his wife, Blanche of Castille.² Meanwhile, William was providing for the renewal of allegiance on the part of those who were now prepared to return to the side of the King. He offered to restore the lands and tenements lost in the war, only retaining the custody of castles.³

¹ The Marshal’s progress was stayed especially by the young Count of Perche. *H.G.M.*, I. 16732 *et seq.* Cf. *Rog. of Wend.*, II., 221.

² *Rog. of Wend.*, II, 220. *H.G.M.*, II. 17069–124.

³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 77. Letters ‘De potestate concessa revocandi inimicos’ were sent to the Bishop of Durham and the Archbishop of York.

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The Marshal foresaw that the issue of the war would depend upon whether or not Louis could receive reinforcements from across the Channel. He, therefore, prepared a land force, and also summoned the men of the Cinque Ports to assemble their ships at Sandwich. William himself desired to embark, but was prevented by his men. 'Should it chance that he was slain or taken prisoner, who would then defend the land?' they asked. On the morning of August 24, 1217, the Marshal ordered all to embark to meet the French fleet which was approaching.

Hubert de Burgh was in command of the English fleet and the battle ended in the utter defeat of the French. Their Commander, Eustace the Monk, was captured and put to death. By the Marshal's orders the booty taken was divided, a part being used to give satisfaction to the sturdy mariners who had won the victory. With the remainder the sailors, at William's bidding, founded a hospital for the poor, in honour of Saint Bartholomew, on whose day the battle had been fought.¹

After taking counsel with his men Louis decided to seek an interview with the Marshal who had lost no time in following up the victory by the blockade of London.² In the peace negotiations which followed, and led to the Treaty of Lam-

¹ *H.G.M.*, II. 17515 *et seq.*

² *Reg. of Wend.*, II.

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beth,¹ William showed wisdom and moderation,² his main object being to rid the land of the French as soon as possible. This was secured by the payment of a sum of money in compensation, for which the Marshal made himself personally responsible.³

After the departure of the French in September 1217, William immediately turned his attention to the reorganization of the financial administration of the country, which during the war had fallen into a chaotic condition. Since Michaelmas 1214, no session of the Exchequer had been held,⁴ and William had experienced the greatest difficulty in raising supplies to support the young King's cause. The situation was such that recourse was had to the King's wardrobe; and precious stones, ornaments, and costly clothing were applied to meeting the expenses of the government. Considerable sums were also advanced by William out of his private estate.⁵

He was compelled to find some means of raising supplies to pay for the cost of the war and the indemnity to Louis. In the first reissue of the

¹ Also called the Treaty of Kingston.

² There was at first a division of opinion amongst his supporters, some of whom were opposed to a parley with Louis. But a continuation of hostilities might have brought the King of France to the aid of his son, and the Marshal realized that the state of the country demanded peace.

³ Shirley: *Royal Lett.*, 1, 7. *Rot. Claus.*, pp. 601-2.

⁴ Norgate: *Henry III.*, p. 81.

⁵ Turner: *T.R.H.S.* See also *H.G.M.*, III, p. xciv, note 1.

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Charter the clauses restricting royal taxation had been omitted,¹ and in the new issue which was now published there was inserted the clause: 'Scutage shall be taken henceforth as it used to be taken in the time of our grandfather King Henry'.²

In October 1217 the Great Council of the Realm sanctioned provisions for raising scutage, carrucage, hidage, and tallage. In November, William Marshal held a session of the Exchequer³ and the sheriffs began once more to pay in their dues. In this month an important Forest Charter was also issued, giving relief from the severe forest enactments of Henry II and John.⁴

In addition to the difficulties of finance and administration, the Marshal had to face the unsettled state of the country generally after the war. He had to secure the relationship of the Crown with Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; he had also to deal with those of the Royalist party who, after the French departure, were unwilling to live peaceable and orderly lives.

The homage of Alexander of Scotland was secured without any special trouble,⁵ but relations

¹ This enabled the Marshal to levy a 'proficuum' in respect of the increased values of the farms (of the shires).

² The reissue also contained new articles providing for holding of county courts, abolition of feudal services, etc.

³ Turner: *T.R.H.S.*

⁴ Stubbs: *S.C.*, p. 344.

⁵ See Henning.

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with Wales presented greater difficulty. Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, taking advantage of the strife in England, had been strengthening his position.¹ Moreover, Llewelyn did not choose to be bound by the Treaty of Lambeth. Peace, however, was made at Worcester in 1218 and Llewelyn was granted to hold during the minority the castles of Cardigan and Carmarthen. For the sake of peace and security the Marshal agreed to an arrangement which certainly was not to his private advantage, for it increased the power of a dangerous neighbour.² But by the consent of the Council William was secured in possession of Caerleon, in spite of the protests of Llewelyn. It had come into his possession, the Marshal maintained, in war, for Morgan of Caerleon had taken no notice of the Treaty of Lambeth, and had killed and ravaged in the neighbourhood.³

In Ireland⁴ there was no open trouble, but the Justiciar, Geoffrey de Marsh, seems to have aroused suspicion.⁵ Though bidden to come to do

¹ Under his leadership the old supremacy of Gwynedd had again become a real thing and he had reduced the Flemings of Pembroke. See Clark: *Earls, Earldom*, etc.; also Lloyd: *Hist. of Wales*, II, 653. Brut., pp. 299, 301, 303.

² Lloyd: *Hist. of Wales*, II., p. 654.

³ Brut., p. 303: 'William Marshal fought against Caerleon and took it, for the Welsh had not consented to the above pacification'. Also see H.G.M., II. 17760, 17782.

⁴ The Marshal had previously confirmed for Ireland the Charter of Liberties. See *Cal. Docs. Ireland*, p. 115.

⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, p. 57.

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homage,¹ the Irish Justiciar did not appear; but he apparently had some excuse to offer, as the question fell into abeyance until after William's death. In England itself some of the more unruly spirits sought an outlet for their energies in tournaments. But the Marshal, old knight-errant though he was, felt compelled to avoid the risk of disturbance by forbidding some of these combats.² More serious was the action of men who presumed to retain their hold on certain castles, against the prohibition of the royal authority.³ Robert de Gaugi, for instance, who held the castle of Newark against the right of the Bishop of Lincoln, refused to give it up in spite of repeated royal admonitions. Ultimately the Marshal himself was compelled to proceed in person against the rebellious castellan and to besiege him.⁴

The Marshal's life was now drawing to a close. In the winter of 1218 appeared the first symptoms of the malady which was to cause his death. In March 1219 he left London and was taken to his manor at Caversham, near Reading. He felt that if his end were near he would rather die there than at any other place.⁵

¹ *Cal. Docs. Ireland*, No. 815.

² Norgate: *Henry III*, p. 96.

³ *Reg. of Wend.*, II, p. 227: 'non potuerunt manus a praeda cohibere'.

⁴ *Hist. des Docs.*, p. 206: 'Guillaumes semouft les os le roi, comme maîtres baillius del regne'.

⁵ For description of these arrangements and the Marshal's death see *H.G.M.*, l. 17873 to end.

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Now that death was approaching the Earl was troubled by the thought of the young King's future. Having summoned the latter, the Legate,¹ and a number of the barons, he addressed himself to the young Henry and recounted how he (Marshal) had been chosen to protect him; that death was about to prevent his doing so any longer; and that it was therefore necessary to choose another in his place. ‘Let God give you a guardian who will do you honour,’ he said.

At this point the Bishop of Winchester interrupted. ‘I recognize, Marshal,’ he exclaimed, ‘that the kingdom was entrusted to you, but to me was the King delivered.’

‘Never,’ answered William. ‘Sir Bishop, that is an evil saying and one that does not become you . . . for all your sakes I took upon me the charge of King and kingdom. Only then did I commit the King to your care because he was too young to journey with me.’ With these words, William, who was suffering greatly, bade the company depart and return next day to hear the choice he would make.

Next morning William took counsel with his son, the Countess, his nephew John Marshal, and others. ‘There is no land,’ declared the Marshal, ‘where opinions are so divided as in England. If I

¹ Pandulf, who followed Gualo as Legate.

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give the King to one, the others will be jealous. For this reason, I wish to confide him to God and the Pope, and especially in their place to the Legate . . . for if the land is not protected by the Pope, verily I know not who will protect it.' All agreed with him.

When the young King and the Legate came again into his presence, the Earl, leaning on his side, took Henry by the hand, and said to the Legate, 'Sir, I have thought long over what we spoke of yesterday. I wish, here in the presence of all, to give the King to God, to the Pope, and to you who represent him.' To the young King he then said: 'Sir, I pray God, if ever I have done anything agreeable to Him, that He give you the grace to be a man of right. Should it chance that you follow the example of any wicked ancestor, then let not God grant you long life.' The young King answered, 'Amen'.

Not yet entirely satisfied, however, the Earl sent his son to present the King to the Legate in the presence of all the barons. The Legate received the King into his charge. Thus by virtue of the Earl's wishes, which were ratified by the magnates, Pandulf succeeded him as regent. By the action of William and the wisdom of Pandulf, who delegated the care of the young King to the Bishop of Winchester, and also some of his administrative functions to

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Hubert de Burgh, the peace of the realm was secured.¹

A heavy burden was thereby lifted from the Earl’s shoulders. The time had now come, so he averred, to arrange all his earthly business, and to think instead of heavenly things. He made his will,² and gave instructions to John d’Erlée as to the manner of his obsequies. His body was to be wrapped in certain silken robes which he had brought back from the East thirty years before.

The Marshal’s next wish was to take the mantle of the Temple. The Master of the Temple, Aimeri de Sainte-More, was therefore sent for. In his presence, with the Countess and his children around him, the Earl declared that he had long ago taken an oath to join the Templars. The mantle of the Order was spread out before him.³ Then he said to the Countess: ‘Come, kiss me, for it will be for the last time’. After this, Aimeri departed to London and by a curious coincidence very soon fell ill and died, having expressed a wish to be buried with the Marshal.⁴

The Earl was now daily growing weaker. To the

¹ See Turner: *T.R.H.S.* Also Pearson, II., p. 124. ‘By the death of the Earl Marshal a few months after this appointment the Legate was left incontestably the first man in the kingdom’.

² *H.G.M.*, Intro., III, p. xcvi, for question of his executors.

³ *Hist. des Ducs.*, p. 257. ‘Guillaumes li Mareschaus, ains qu’il moruist, se rendi au Temple.’

⁴ The knights regarded this sudden death as a sign that God loved the Marshal and had taken Brother Aimeri in advance to be ready to receive him.

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last he was faithfully cared for by his wife, his children, and his followers. He was never left alone. When the end was near he murmured: 'I am dying; I commend you to God; I can rest no longer with you; I can no longer defend myself against death'. The Abbot of Nutley with a number of monks entered the apartment, but the Earl could speak no more. He could only make a sign to welcome the Abbot of Reading who now unexpectedly arrived. He brought a message of peculiar consolation to the dying man—special absolution sent on behalf of the Legate himself. The Abbot of Reading, assisted by the Abbot of Nutley and others, now pronounced pontifical absolution, with full indulgence for all the sins he had confessed. Then, as his biographer says, 'God did His will with him as He does with all the good whom He wishes to summon to Himself'.

So died the Earl Marshal on May 14, 1219, at the age of about 75, loved and respected by all. As his body was borne from Caversham to London, the cortège was joined by earls and barons, bishops and abbots, all eager to take part in paying the last honours to one of such universal repute. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, conducted the funeral service, and thanked God for the honour given to the Marshal in life and in death. But, 'See', he exclaimed, 'how much the life of the world is worth. When one is

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dead one is nothing more than a little earth. There lie the remains of the best knight of our time.’ Before the cross in the Temple Church, and next to the body of the late Master, Aimeri de Saint-More, William Marshal was laid to rest.¹

¹ *M.P. Chron. Maj.*, III, p. 43. *Hist. Anglorum*, II, p. 232, quotes his epitaph:

‘Sum quem Saturnum sibi sensit Hibernia, Solem
Anglia, Mercurium Normannia, Gallia Martem.’

VIII

WILLIAM MARSHAL—AN ESTIMATE

IN drawing a picture of William Marshal, in an endeavour to gain from a record of his life an understanding of the man and to form a true estimate of his importance in English history, we have followed him as he grew up in a world entirely different from our own; we have watched him as he climbed higher and higher until from a knight errant he became the ruler of a realm.

The great Marshal was typical of the twelfth century at its best. As personifying the qualities most admired in his own day he approximated to the ideal of the manhood of his time. Richly endowed with natural gifts and trained in the hard school of knighthood, he emerged out of the turbulent conditions of the period not only as a warrior feared for his strength and skill, but also as a trusted leader and statesman embodying the precepts of the feudal age. His personality was forged in a century when feudal ties were strong and physical force was the main arbiter in disputes; and his life, in close association with royalty in four reigns, and ultimately as a powerful magnate and ruler of the country, is the story of the natural reactions of a man of high character

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and singular honesty of purpose to the environment in which he moved.

In the skilful prowess of the knight, his strength and fearlessness, his energy and determination, may be traced the severe training of the squire and the effect of the military exercises which accustomed the youth to combat, hardship, and blows. In his loyalty as a vassal and his rectitude as a ruler we see qualities demanded by the oath taken to the feudal superior, and by the best teaching of the Church with regard to those set in authority. But the unimpeachable nature of his conduct, which won for him the universal admiration of his age, points to a nobility of character which was rare and impressive; and which, while displayed within the limits of a feudal conception, nevertheless by the very fullness of its expression proclaims the Marshal as one who achieved greatness almost as much by what he was in himself as by the work he accomplished in the great positions he held.

As knight, as soldier, as statesman, William Marshal expressed the nobler side of the character of his age and gave reality to its finer ideals. He is typical of many of his class, yet he rises above them all. There is no lack of testimony to his high qualities and the general rectitude of his conduct. Indeed, it is because his contemporaries recognized in the Marshal the symbol of what they

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regarded as most meritorious and praiseworthy in the life of the time that his career is of exceptional interest, and for the historian a profitable subject for study.

As a youth he was unsurpassed for his deeds of knightly prowess. With maturer years he inspired trust in those about him and won the respect and confidence of kings. By friend and foe alike the Marshal was highly esteemed. And in his declining years—though years none the less marked by unceasing energy and enterprise—he bore on his shoulders the responsibility for the administration of England during one of the crises in her national story.

Nor was it an age lacking in strong personalities. Indeed, the Marshal lived in an age of great men. Born and bred in the twelfth century—*'le grand siècle du Moyen Age'*—he survived well into the first half of the thirteenth. In both the lay and the ecclesiastical spheres there were outstanding figures—Henry II, Philip Augustus, Richard Cœur de Lion, Bernard of Clairvaux, Suger St. Denis, Innocent III, Stephen Langton, and others. If the Marshal challenges comparison with the greatest men of his day it is because of his fine qualities of character rather than of intellect. His strength as a leader of men lay in his directness, his honesty, his loyalty and common sense, added to undaunted courage, inflexible determination, and the

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possession of such exceptional physical powers as constituted an enormous asset in the age in which he lived.

As a knight we see in him something of the ideal—the warrior of the ‘chanson de geste’, yet permeated with the chivalrous qualities of the heroes of the modern idyll. For what was the duty of the true knight? ‘To protect the Church, to fight against treachery, to reverence the priesthood, to fend off injustice from the poor, to make peace in your own province, to shed your blood for your brethren, and, if needs be, to lay down your life.’¹

A very different picture of knighthood as it had become in practice is given by Peter of Blois. ‘The Order of Knighthood, in these days of ours,’ he says, ‘is mere disorder. . . . The knights of old were wont to bind themselves by an oath to maintain the state, never to flee in battle, and to set the common weal before their own life. . . . Yet in practice they do the contrary. . . . They dishonour the name and order of Knighthood.’² The knightly ideal, like other mediaeval ideals, such as those inculcated by Bernard of Clairvaux or Francis of Assisi, degenerated in practice; but William Marshal, in being universally recognized as a pattern of chivalry, must have done much to maintain the high standard attributed to the ‘Knights of old’.

¹John of Salisbury: *Policraticus*. Coulton, *Social Life in Britain*, p. 281.

²Coulton, *ibid.*, p. 282.

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In reviewing the career of the Marshal, however, we must beware of judging the actions of a twelfth-century knight—even ‘the best knight of his time’¹—by the standard of our modern ideas of right and wrong. Mediaeval life was marked by vehement pathos, by clear-cut and simple distinction between good and evil, joy and sorrow, reward and punishment, divorced from the qualifications and distinctions which the science and psychology of our own time have introduced. Emotion and excitement were strongly felt and freely expressed. At Verneuil Richard could scarcely stop kissing the members of the garrison after the successful defence.² At his meeting with the little Henry III after his father’s death William Marshal wept.³ Again on commencing his heavy task as regent the Marshal wept; as did also John d’Erlée and the others present.⁴ Private war in the feudal age had its root cause in pride of rank, greed of one’s neighbour’s riches, the thirst for vengeance, and other primitive and elemental motives. William as a knight won what he could in the tourney by the strength of his arm. The question of right and wrong troubled him little. If he gained honour and riches, God gave them to him. God was his protector and champion.⁵

¹ Stephen Langton at the Marshal’s funeral.

² *H.G.M.*, l. 10505.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 15283.

⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 15649.

⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 9285.

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Having complete confidence in his strength and skill, and knowing no fear, he was always ready to vindicate himself by an appeal to the judicial duel. In this matter, King John had more reason on his side when he answered the Marshal's appeal for justification by combat with the words: 'By God's teeth! What you say is worth nothing.' William put his trust, with typical knightly simplicity, in the outcome of battle. To John such an outcome could signify little when, as appeared by the silence of the other barons and knights, all feared the Marshal's reputation as a giver of hard blows.¹

It was mainly physical strength and the confidence it inspired that enabled William to triumph in the tourney, and to win his way by the seizure of knights, horses, and armour. He had no compunction in carrying off as prisoner a man who had fallen from his horse and was injured.² The incident of the disguised monk and his mistress,³ to modern eyes, exhibits William in the part of a highway robber rather than a leader of chivalry. Since it was the monk's intention to put his little money out to usury William had no hesitation in seizing it for the use of himself and his friends. Such actions were apparently legitimate according to the morality of the time.

¹ *H.G.M.*, ll. 13091-190.

² *Ibid.*, l. 7219.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 6699.

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On the other hand, in spite of the improper use of physical strength which, in the light of modern ideas, seems on occasion to have turned the knight into the robber and bully, William was compassionate by nature. When his companions would have hanged a wounded thief, the Marshal spared him.¹ At the retreat from Le Mans he descended from his horse to give aid to a woman who, weeping bitterly the while, was trying to save some of her worldly goods from her house which had caught fire in the burning town.²

Equal to his fame as a knight was the reputation William Marshal gained by his fidelity to the feudal bond. His rule of conduct was always loyalty, understood in the strict mediaeval sense of adherence to the oath of fealty. In face of every difficulty he steadfastly held to this guiding principle. When the young King rebelled against his father, Henry II, William supported the young lord in whose train he had been placed by the father.³ Asked to do homage to Richard I for his Irish lands, he refused, for he had already done homage to John as King of Ireland.⁴ Against Philip Augustus he would not fight after having done liege homage to him for his lands in Normandy.⁵ De Braose, although a brutal man, the 'worst of the Marchers', found refuge with

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 4425 *et seq.*

³ See p. 10.

⁵ See p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, I. 8753 *et seq.*

⁴ See p. 29.

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William because he was his kinsman and lord.¹ In every case he adhered without flinching to his conception of loyalty. This quality in the Marshal was recognized by Henry II, by Richard, and by the King of France. Even John when in danger looked to the Marshal for help and in his last moments confided his son to his care. 'In good truth,' declared Philip Augustus when he heard of his death, 'the Marshal was the most loyal man I ever knew.'²

In common with others of his generation his conception of loyalty was crude and narrow. We find no trace of the sentiment of nationality, which was later to become so powerful a force in Europe, and patriotism, as understood in modern times, was outside the range of his feelings. In his harangue to the army before the battle of Lincoln the Earl appealed to simple and primitive motives, not to any national sentiment against the French. 'Those who would seize our lands and goods are in our hands,' he cried. 'If we die in this enterprise, God, who recognizes the good, will put us in Paradise. . . . You know also that our foes are excommunicate; those who fall will go straight to hell. It is God who has put them in our power. Charge upon them! The moment is come.'³ William's word was his bond. 'By my faith!' it

¹ See p. 47.

² *H.G.M.*, I. 19149.

³ *Ibid.*, I. 16276 *et seq.*

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was said, 'if the Marshal gives us his guarantee, we are as good as paid already'.¹ After the death of King John, it was the Marshal and Hubert de Burgh who saw to it that the late King's debts to the Templars were paid.²

Generous, too, he was to his friends, to his followers, and to the Church. In the days when he won wealth in tournaments he shared his successes with his comrades, and sometimes allowed knights who had surrendered to depart without ransom. To the Church he made bequests at his death, and during his life he founded or enriched several religious establishments.

Yet his attitude to religion was marked by the peculiarly mediaeval combination of a naïve belief in the teachings of the Church with frequent disobedience to the express declarations of ecclesiastics or even of the sovereign pontiff himself. In the dispute between Pope Innocent III and King John he took the side of the latter,³ the direct feudal bond having more force for him than the declaration of the highest ecclesiastical authority. Tournaments were frowned on by the Church, yet they were the 'good knight's' chief source of

¹ *H.G.M.*, I. 5090.

² Agnes Sandys: 'Lond. Temple in thirteenth century', in *Essays pres. to Tout*.

³ *Cal. Docs. Ireland*, p. 448: Manifesto of magnates of Ireland, headed by William Marshal, in favour of John. '... with the King they are prepared to live or die.'

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livelihood. It was the protection of the Church that he sought for the young Henry III when he could no longer support the burden himself, but when prompted to surrender his gains before his death the Marshal declared: 'The clerks are too hard on us. They shave us too close. I have taken five hundred knights, their arms, horses, and apparel. If on this account the kingdom of God is forbidden me, there is nothing to say, for I cannot give them up. I can do no more than to commit myself to God, repenting of all my faults. Unless the clerks desire my complete ruin, they must push me no farther. Either their argument is false, or else none can be saved.'¹

By upbringing and by temperament the Marshal was conservative. He was not fitted to play a leading part in movements having for their object the curtailment of the powers of royalty. Here perhaps he had the defect of one of his qualities, his high sense of loyalty rendering any effective opposition on his part to royal tyranny difficult if not impossible. Thus in the struggle between King John and the barons he was on the side of the King; but he was not committed to John's policy and one of the first acts of his regency was the reissue of the Charter.

In the services he rendered he did not spare himself and he assumed heavy personal respon-

¹ *H.G.M.*, II. 18468-501.

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sibilities.¹ Such was his devotion to the young Henry III that he declared: 'If all should forsake him, know you what I should do? I would carry him on my shoulders, a leg here, a leg there, from isle to isle, from land to land, and would never fail him, no, even though I had to beg my bread.'²

The Earl at this time had a great duty imposed upon him and nobly he carried it out. In him were discovered the energy, sagacity, and military skill which the crisis demanded. When he commenced his task as 're \acute ctor regis et regni' the country was in a chaotic condition. In three years he had accomplished a great work of pacification. The barons had been appeased, the foreign invader ejected, and his young charge firmly established on the throne of his ancestors. This can be regarded only as a very notable achievement, even when full allowance is made for the reaction in favour of the royalist party which followed the removal from the scene of the discordant personality of King John, and the enthronement in his place of an innocent child whose helplessness in a difficult situation naturally aroused the country's sympathy.

In the last years of his life the Earl had full opportunity for the exercise of his high qualities

¹ E.g., the assumption of the regency in his old age and his becoming personally responsible for the indemnity to Louis.

² *H.G.M.*, II. 15627-96.

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—his loyalty, his honesty, the confidence he inspired, his ability as a statesman and soldier, his moderation in the hour of victory, and his skill in the negotiation of peace. Indeed, in an age when statesmanship in any true sense of the word, was principally the business of clerics, William Marshal is one of the few laymen to whom the term can be applied.

Perhaps the most fitting tribute to the great Marshal is found in a Letter Patent,¹ sealed by the Legate and the Bishop of Winchester on behalf of the young Henry III, and addressed to the Justiciar of Ireland, ordering the latter to accept the Marshal as lord. 'For William,' runs this document, 'always faithfully and devotedly stood by our father while he was alive and constantly adheres to us and aids us, and we hold his allegiance to be praiseworthy before that of all the other barons of our realm; for like gold in the furnace he proved himself in time of need.'²

¹ *Cal. Lett. Pat.*, pp. 9-10.

² 'Quoniam tanquam aurum in furnace sic se in necessitate probavit.'

APPENDIX I

WILLIAM AND THE OFFICE OF MARSHAL

By the death of his elder brother John, William inherited the office of Marshal. It was confirmed to him by King John by royal charter on April 20, 1200. The Marshalship which was thus confirmed was the:

Magistratum maresc, curie nostre quam magistratum Gillebertus Marescallus Henrici Regis avi patris nostri et Johannes filius ipsius Gilleberti disrationaverat coram predicto Rege Henrico in curia sua contra Robertum de Venoiz, et contra Wilielmum de Hastings, qui ipsum magistratum calumniabantur . . . ¹

There is in this confirmation no trace of there being two marshalships, a Marshalship of the Household transmitted to William from Gilbert Marshal and also a Marshalship of England inherited by William 'jure uxoris', as is stated in *The Complete Peerage*.² Mr. Round has traced to its source the error which gave rise to this theory, and in so far as it touches William Marshal, he has explicitly stated that 'after the alleged union of the offices there is no trace of their being granted as more than one'.³

¹ *Rot. Chart.*, I, p. 46.

² *Complete Peerage* (G.E.C.), V, p. 260.

³ 'The Marshalship of England' in *The Commune of London* (Chap. XV).

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The office which William held was that of the 'Magister Marescallus'. There were other marshals, however, of a different or subsidiary character. Robert de Venoiz, who had failed in his claim to the Marshalship itself, held, nevertheless, a true marshal serjeanty.¹ We find mentioned in *The Red Book of the Exchequer* a William Fitz-Aldelin, Marscallus, Wigan Marscallus, and Radulfus 'filius Wigani'. There were, too, four marshals in the marshal's department besides the Master Marshal,² and possibly the marshal 'de meretricibus'³ or 'marescallus meretricum'⁴ was included among these. And it has also been suggested that the functions of the marshal in the several courts of law may all ultimately derive from the earl marshal, who, in 1260, claimed, in effect, the office of Marshal in the King's Bench and in the Eyre, and was already, under Henry III, represented in the Exchequer by a marshal with functions similar to those of the marshal in the courts of a later date.⁵

The origin of the Marshalship as of the other officers of the royal household is evidently to be sought in remote antiquity. The meaning of the word may be traced to 'marescallare' meaning to

¹ Round: *King's Serjeants, etc.*, p. 89.

² *Red Book of Excheq.*, pp. 209, 304, 812.

³ See 'A Marshalship at Court' in *King's Serjeants, etc.*

⁴ Camden in Hearne's *Curious Discourses*, II, p. 95.

⁵ See Miss H. M. Cam, *Camb. Hist. Journal*, I, no. 2 (1924).

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manage a palfrey, and Mr. Round has pointed out the Marshal's connection with the horse, more especially in relation to the ceremonial of the 'great spurs' at the coronation.¹ In Domesday Book there are several marshals mentioned, and it is possible that a certain Robert Marescal, who was a more considerable landowner than the others mentioned, was the 'progenitor of Gilbert who held the Chief Marshalship under Henry I, and who was succeeded before 1130 by his son John the Marshal'.² If this is actually the case then the office of the Marshal can be traced back to the Conquest. Mr. Round asserts that 'Edward the Confessor had, in effect, a Marshal'.³ Thus in the office of Marshal that William Marshal held there must have been, taking into account the age of the office and the number of subsidiary officers, a 'developing and defining process' such as that referred to by Stubbs with regard to the offices of Justiciar and Constable, as well as with regard to the office of Marshal itself.⁴ Thus had ultimately emerged the office of Chief Marshal, the 'Magister Marescallus'.

What were the duties of the Marshal, by what tenure was it supported, and how far did William Marshal fulfil the customary duties of his office?

¹ Clark: *Earls, etc.* Round: *King's Serjeants, etc.*, pp. 85 and 371.

² *D.B.I.*, pp. 49, 73. Davis: *Regesta, etc.*, p. xxvi.

³ Round in *E.H.R.*, XIX, p. 90.

⁴ Stubbs, *C.H.*, I, p. 384.

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These appear to be the problems which most concern the official part of the great Earl's life.

The Marshal was essentially a military officer and was regularly connected with the Constable, though whether in a different capacity or as a subsidiary officer does not appear certain.¹ In Edward I's reign there occurred the famous scene between the King and his Constable and Marshal. The latter declared that he would accompany the King on foreign service as required, provided that he should go: 'Praecedendo faciem tuam in acie prima, sicut mihi competit haereditario jure'.² This illustrates the military character of the office. Professor Powicke, however, has pointed out that John, the nephew of William Marshal, appears as Marshal and as fulfilling military duties connected with the host in Normandy and that there is no evidence to show that William personally performed these duties.³

Besides his military duties, the Marshal was an officer of the Court. In the *De servitiis Magnatum in die Coronationis Regis et Reginae* we find the duties of the Marshal at the coronation. It refers to that of Queen Eleanor in 1236. On that occasion:

Servivit Gilbertus Marescallus, Comes de Strigul, cujus est officium tumultus sedare in domo Regis, liberationes

¹ Stubbs, *C.H.*, I, p. 383. Round: *King's Serjeants, etc.*, p. 76.

² Stubbs, *S.C.*, p. 431.

³ Powicke: *Loss of Normandy*. Appendix to chapter 'War and Finance'.

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hospitiorum facere, hostia aulae Regis custodire. Recepit autem de quolibet arma (Barone), facto milite a rege, et de quolibet Comite ea die palefridum cum sedella.¹

At the coronation of Richard, John Marshal, William's elder brother, carried the golden spurs. And indeed the Chief Marshal by reason of his connection with the horse would be the most likely officer to carry the spurs.²

Also the Marshal had his duties in the Exchequer. In the *Constitutio Domus Regis* (of c. 1135) we read:

Magister Marescallus, similiter scilicet Johannes [referring to payments to officials]. Et praeter hoc debet habere dicas de donis et liberationibus quae fuerint de Thesaurio Regis et de sua camera; et debet habere dicas contra omnes officiales et reges ut testis per omnia.³

Probably William fulfilled his Exchequer duties by a deputy-official. As far as we know the duties of the coronation and the carrying of the spurs were not performed by William Marshal, or if they were we have no certain mention of the fact. Particularly in the case of the spurs, Mr. Round has stated that besides the coronation of Richard I and Edward II 'we have no other precedents previous to 1377'.⁴ As a court or household office

¹ *Red Book of Excheq.*, p. 759. See Round: *Commune of London* for writing 'Barone' instead of 'arma'. Note here the gift of the horse, i.e., the Marshal's fee.

² Round: *King's Serjeants, etc.*, p. 371.

³ *Red Book of Excheq.*, p. 812.

⁴ Round: *King's Serjeants, etc.*, p. 367.

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the Marshalship had become hereditary, while offices which were connected more directly with the business of the State remained ministerial. Each member of the household in his capacity as a member of the Curia Regis and Exchequer exercised judicial functions¹ and thus we find William Marshal acting as a justice.² But whatever were the duties which William performed in person as Marshal, we know from the story of his life that he took a prominent part in war and counsel. And it may well be that the reputation which William himself gained by his administration in the first years of Henry III has lent a certain greatness and glamour to the office.

We now proceed to the rather vexed question of the tenure by which the Marshalship was held. It has been assumed that the Marshalship was held by the tenure of Hampstead Marshal as a 'Grand Serjeanty'.³ In Domesday, Hampstead was held by Hugh the Steersman, 'who may have been a serjeant'.⁴ But in the thirteenth century it is recorded as being held 'de Marescangia', by service of the Marshal's wand, and 'per serjanciam mareschallie',⁵ while in 1306 it is held by knight service.⁶ Mr. Round, however, refuses to believe

¹ Stubbs: *C.H.*, I, p. 384.

² See p. 27, note 2.

³ V.C.H.: *Berkshire*, II, p. 169. Miss E. C. Lodge.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 291. Round.

⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 179. H. J. E. Peake } Also Round: *King's Serjeants*,

⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 179.

p. 90.

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that the 'Chief Marshalship' was held by serjeanty in connection with Hampstead Marshal since 'it is not found among the recognized Berkshire serjeanties', and also because 'there is no proof that the marshals held it so early as the days of Henry I'.¹ The question must therefore be left undecided. It might possibly be observed, however, that William Marshal also held in Wiltshire—

'Todeworthe per serjanteriam marscalciae.'²

Now William's father, John Marshal, held lands in Wiltshire;³ might not these lands be the estate by which the Marshalship was held in serjeanty?

¹ Round: *King's Serjeants, etc.*, p. 90.

² *Red Book of Excheq.*, p. 487.

³ *Pipe Roll*, 1130. John Marshal 'Debet xxii li. xiiis. et iiiid. per terra et ministerio patris sui'.

APPENDIX II

THE GREAT EARL AND HIS LANDS

WILLIAM MARSHAL by his marriage with the heiress of Pembroke became a great feudal tenant in chief. As lord of wide lands in four countries his power and resources must have been very great. In the intervals when he was not actively engaged in the service of the King, William lived on his lands in Wales or Ireland; he fought in their defence or to enlarge them, and was engaged in affairs connected with their administration.

(a) *In Normandy*, William was Lord of Longueville, Moulliers, and Orbec.¹ He acquired Longueville by the division of the lands of Walter Giffard, Earl of Buckingham, between his (William's) wife Isabel and Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford, since both were descended from Rohaise, sister of Walter Giffard. On the death of Walter without male heirs his lands had been seized into the King's hands (Henry II) and set at ferm to the royal officers. Richard I, in 1191, granted the above-mentioned division, William fining in 2000

¹ *Cal. Docs. France*, p. 475. Royal Charters. By his arrangement of 1204 with Philip of France, William mentions the castles of Orbec, Longueville, and Moulliers (Meulers).

See also Delisle: *Le Sceau de Guillaume le Maréchal*, which quotes confirmation of lands of Abbey of Foucarmont. To this charter is attached William's seal, showing him on horseback and brandishing a sword.

William Marshal, First Earl of Pembroke marks for the moiety of the lands, the 'caput' of the estate in Normandy passing to Isabel and her husband, while the 'caput' in England went to Richard de Clare.¹

(b) *In England*, William held by knight service the castle of Goodrich and an honour in Gloucestershire, lands in Buckinghamshire of the honour of Earl Giffard, and other knight fees in Hereford, Essex, and Oxford.²

Also Hampstead Marshal was probably held by William, either by serjeanty or knight service; and, in Wiltshire, Todeworthe was held 'per serjanteriam marscalciae'.³

(c) *In Wales*, the Marshal as Earl of Pembroke and Striguil (Chepstow) occupied a great position. The Norman earls of Pembroke held their lands by the sword. They were in the midst of a more or less hostile country, and therefore had always to be prepared for war. But besides warfare with the Welsh they sometimes employed their resources in other ways; they could use their lands as a refuge and a defence against their sovereign and also as a base whence to conquer and retain still larger territories in South Ireland. The earls of

¹ Stapleton: *Magni Rot. Scacc. Norm.*, II, p. cxxxviii. Also see a confirmation by William of a charter of Walter Giffard to the Priory of St. Faith, Longueville. *Cal. Docs. France*, pp. 75, 79.

² *Red Book of Excheq.* List of Scutages, p. 157. Also Clark: *Earls, etc.*, and *Red Book of Excheq.*, pp. 132, 496, 575, 600.

³ William witnesses royal letters there (at Hampstead) during the Minority. See also *Red Book of Excheq.*, p. 487.

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Pembroke were thus specially powerful. Under so loyal a man as William Marshal the full strength of the position had been utilized in the royal favour. His services were employed in Wales, as in 1204, to escort Llewelyn ap Iorwerth to a meeting with the King at Worcester.¹ But it had not always been so, and some of the Marshal's sons came into conflict with the royal authority under Henry III.

The Marshal's lands in Pembroke were defended by a network of castles to protect the country against the raids of the Welsh. Pembroke and Haverford commanded the Haven, to the north there were Upton, Lawhaden, Narberth, and to the south Castle-Martin, Manorbier, Tenby, and Carew.

Pembroke Castle itself, which is one of the noblest of British fortresses, was probably partly built by William Marshal, the keep being attributed to him.² The Pembroke lands, as well as William's other territories, would be administered for him by his officers or bailiffs, who would see to the defence of his castles.³ The necessity of constant watchfulness is illustrated by the warfare among the sons of the Lord Rees which disturbed South Wales in 1204—when William took Cilgerran

¹ *Rot. Pat.*, I, p. 44. *Rot. Claus.*, I, p. 12.

² See Clark: *Earls, Earldom, and Castle of Pembroke*, p. 117.

³ *H.G.M.*, I. 17782, mentions 'li baillis al Mar'.

William Marshal, First Earl of Pembroke 'primo impetu'¹—and by Llewelyn's attack on Pembroke in 1217.²

William's other Welsh possessions also were of no little importance. The marcher lords claimed 'extra comitatum' the freedom of jurisdiction derived from conquest,³ and as lord of the strong castle of Chepstow with the over-lordship of Usk, Caerleon, and Caerwent, William, Earl of Pembroke, was at the same time a powerful figure in the Welsh march. On the partition of his lands, considerable holdings in Monmouthshire, including the castles of Usk, Trillech, and Caerleon which had been taken from Morgan of Caerleon in war, passed to Marshal's daughter Isabel with her husband, Gilbert de Clare.⁴ The abbey of Tintern shared with the Temple Church of London the honour of receiving the bodies of a number of the Marshal family, William's wife, his sons Walter and Anselm, and his daughter Matilda, all being buried at Tintern.⁵

(d) *In Ireland*, William inherited 'jure uxoris' the lands of Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, including Kilkenny, Wexford, Kildare, and Car-

¹ *Brut. y Tywysogion*, p. 260. *Annales Cambriae*, p. 63. See also Lloyd: *Hist. of Wales*, p. 619, for the taking of Cilgerran.

² See p. 67.

³ Jacob: *T.R.H.S.*, 4th series. X, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid*, X, p. 23.

⁵ *Chart. St. Mary's, Dublin*, II, pp. 142, 3. Matilda 'sepulta apud Tynternam in Wallia, quatuor filiis suis, militibus, ipsam in choro portantibus'.

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low.¹ By grant of Richard I, William obtained seisin of his Irish lands from John, who had been nominally King of Ireland since 1177. William sent his bailiff to take possession.²

William Marshal was in Ireland at intervals during his service with the English kings, but very little is known about his life there. Doubtless, as in Wales, there was frequent warfare both with the other English settlers there and with the native Irish. We catch a glimpse of the unruly condition of the country in the conduct of the Justiciar during parts of John's reign and the attacks he made, apparently with the English King's permission, on the men and lands of William Marshal. But the importance of William Marshal's position as Earl of Leinster is apparent in the successful issue of the warfare his men were compelled to carry on with the Justiciar and the annoyance of King John when he heard the result.³ There is also Matthew Paris's story of the war in which William took from the Bishop of Ferns two manors claimed by the Bishop as the property of the Church.⁴

William endowed several religious establishments in Ireland, including those of Wexford, Duisk, and Kilkenny.⁵ In the year 1200 he founded a

¹ *Chart. St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, II, p. 401. Partition of Lands and Possessions in Ireland among representatives of William Marshal.

² *H.G.M.*, I, 9621.

³ See p. 46.

⁴ See p. 46.

⁵ *Chart. St. Mary's* . . . II, p. lxxviii.

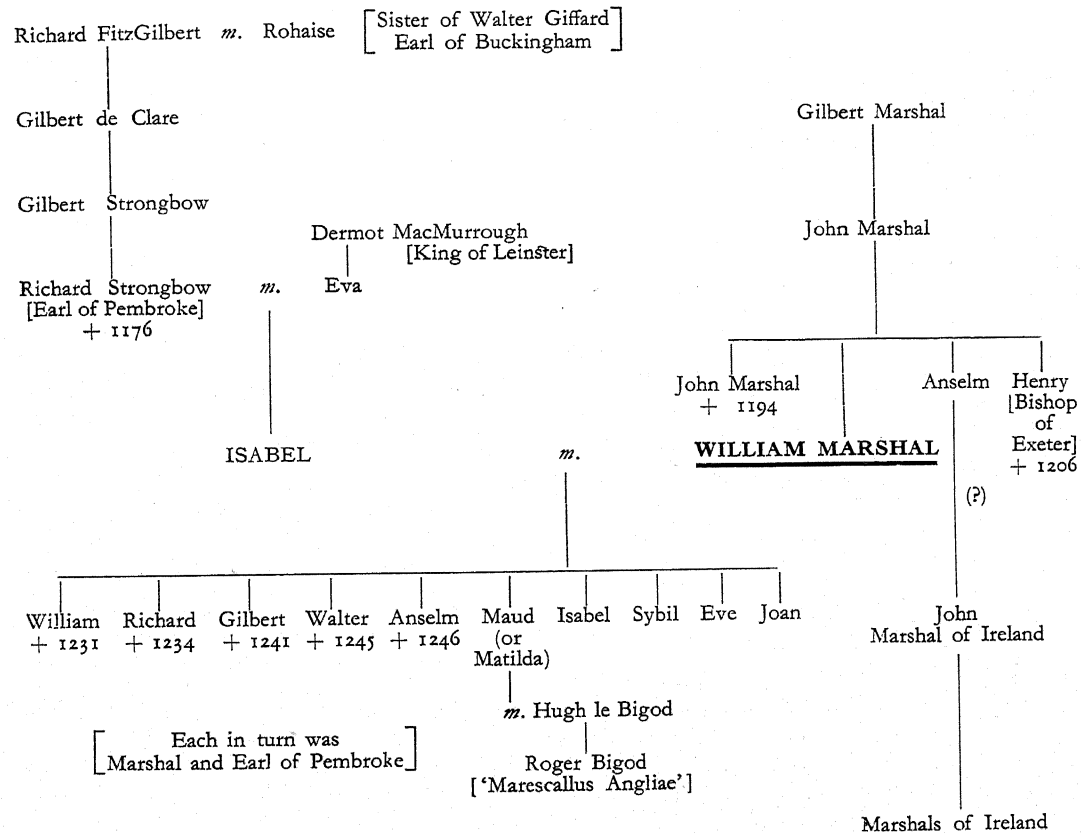
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Cistercian abbey near Dunbrody, and in accordance with a vow made at sea during a storm it was designated 'De Voto'. To occupy his foundation William brought monks from his abbey of Tintern in Wales so that the new Irish monastery was sometimes known as 'New Tintern'.¹ William's charters of confirmation and protection to St. Mary's Abbey, Dunbrody, are enrolled in the register of that abbey.²

¹ *Chart St. Mary's* . . . II, p. lxxviii, and p. 142.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 158-160.

GENEALOGY OF WILLIAM MARSHAL



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